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COMPUTER GAME REVIEW and CD-ROM Entertainment

April, 1994
Volume 3, Issue 9

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FLIPSIDE. . .

My how the time flies. It seems like the proverbial yesterday that we were celebrating New Year's and trying to remember to write "1994" on our checks and here it is April. I wish to call your attention to an editorial I wrote a few months ago in which I stated that gamers shouldn't put up with products that are buggy or have fatal errors. While the response to this wasn't nearly that of some other editorials I've written, at least as far as readers are concerned, it did garner an interesting reaction within the industry.

PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT BUGS IN SOFTWARE, AND THAT IS CERTAINLY WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS AS CONSUMERS.

A member of a leading company who shall remain nameless contacted me soon after reading that editorial and asked not that I print a retraction, but that I show the other side of the coin. The statements made were good ones, and, as is often the case with any sort of one-sided argument that an editorial usually is, were things I hadn't considered. Ergo:

People complain about bugs in software, and that is certainly within their rights as consumers. But many games have millions of lines of code. Are we expecting perfection from the programmers? Let's be honest here. Programmers find 99.9% of the bugs that crop up in their games. Are we to hold them in contempt because placing your character (or army or airplane) in a certain position at a certain time and with a particular amount of ammunition (or strength, or whatever ad infinitum) causes the screen to turn blue? I think not.

CAN WE REALISTICALLY DEMAND THAT COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS ACHIEVE PERFECTION?

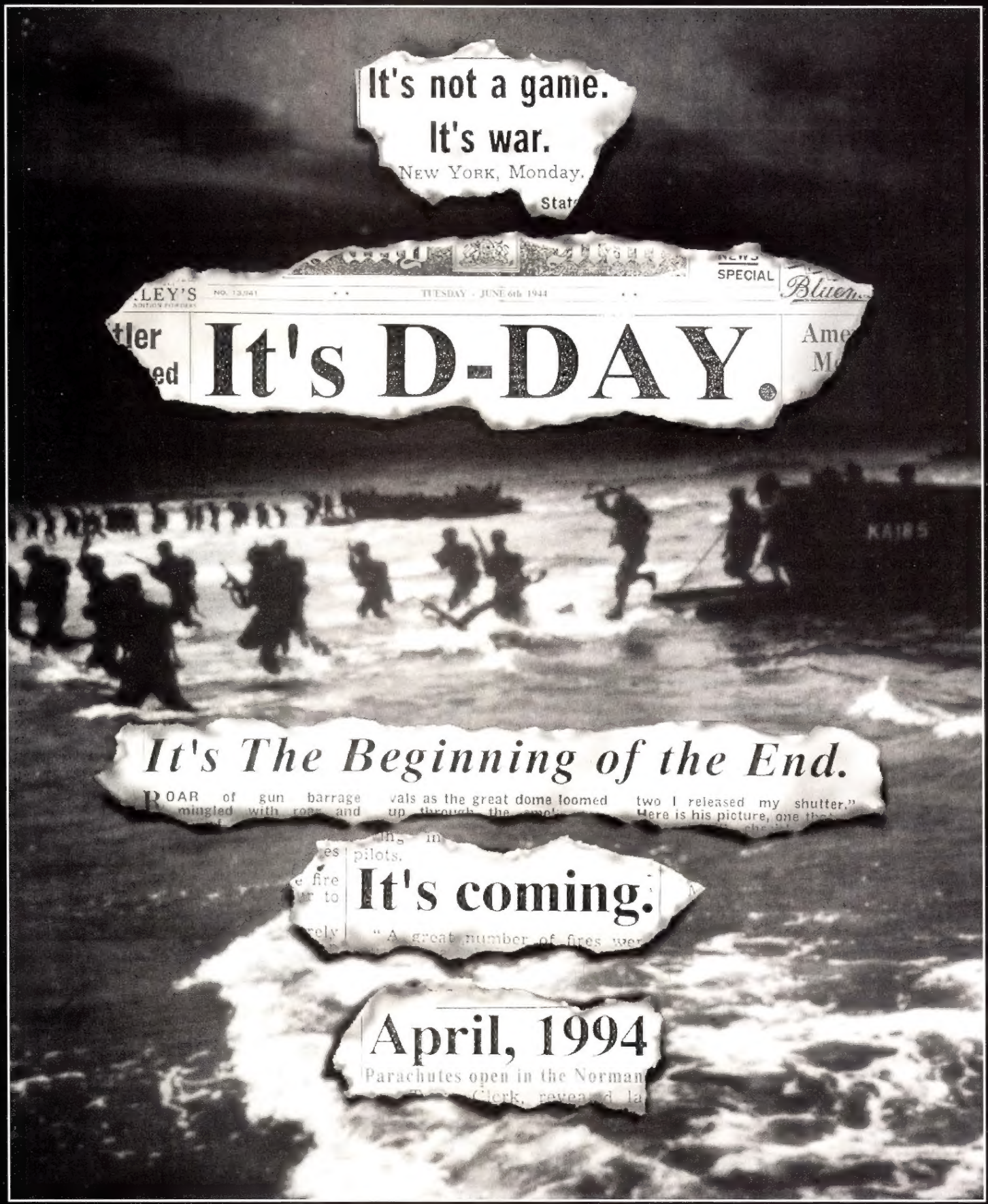
I stand by my statement that gamers should not put up with games that have fatal errors. A crash bug is something that ought to be worked out in beta-testing. However, occasional goofiness probably should be overlooked. After all, we don't expect perfection out of our doctors, lawyers, statesmen, clergy or parents. Can we realistically demand that computer programmers achieve perfection?

This is something to think about. In several million lines of code, occasionally a bug gets through since even in beta-testing, no matter how rigorous it is, not every possible situation can be accounted for. There are some that will cause strange occurrences on the computer. Alert the company who created the game. The chances are pretty good that the bug you've found is one that never occurred in beta-testing. If it's one of the typical sort, you've found something akin to an Easter egg–a non-fatal occurrence that does something to the game. Don't get on your high horse, since again, chances are decent that you've run across one line of code out of several million that weren't exactly flawless. Give the programmers a break and think about what life would be like if everyone expected perfection out of you.

THANKS, TIM, FOR ALL OF THE DEDICATED WORK YOU'VE PUT IN ON CGR, AND CONGRATULATIONS ON MOVING UP IN THE WORLD.

Now, off the soapbox and on to other matters of importance. **CGR** is losing, sort of, a member of its family. Tim Ostermiller, who has been our copy editor for the past several years is moving to a new position here at Sendai and will now be in charge of, among other things, training new employees. We'll miss Tim in our neck of the building although I'm sure that we'll still have to kick him off Wolfenstein 3-D, Doom or Links 386 every once in awhile. Thanks, Tim, for all of the dedicated work you've put in on **CGR**, and congratulations on moving up in the world. I'd say we'll miss you, except that we still have to look at you every day. I'll talk at you again in thirty days. Until then, keep your powder dry.

STEVE HONEYWELL
EDITOR



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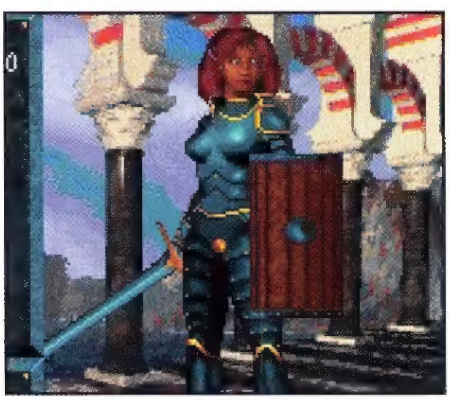

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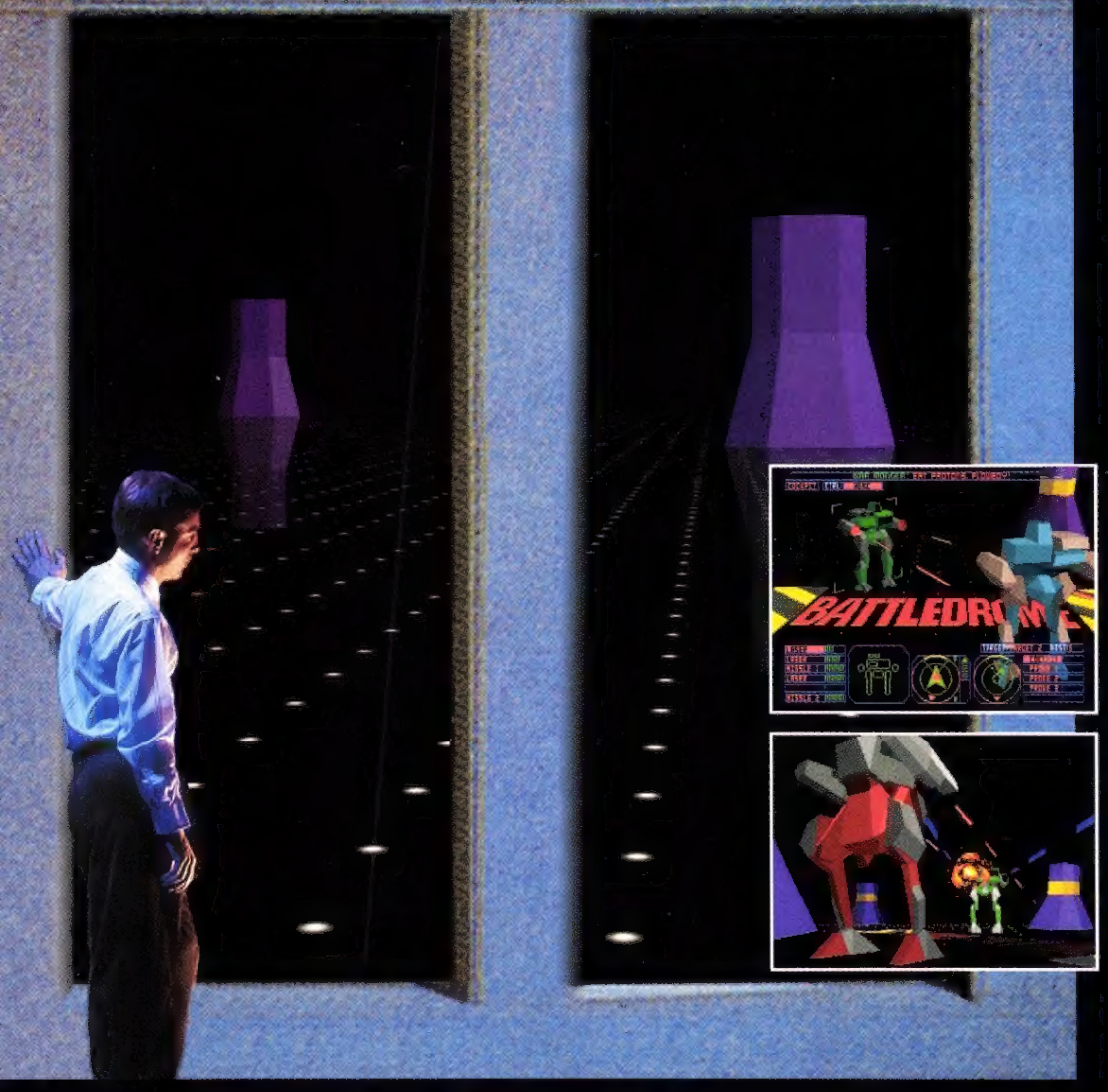
SOMEONE OUT THERE WANTS TO DESTROY YOU.



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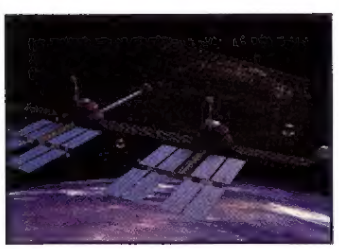
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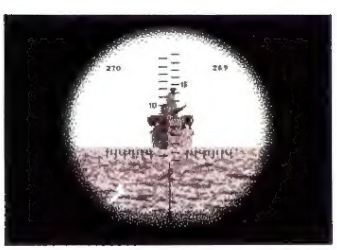
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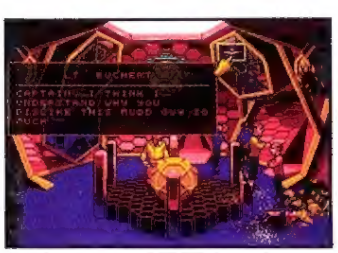
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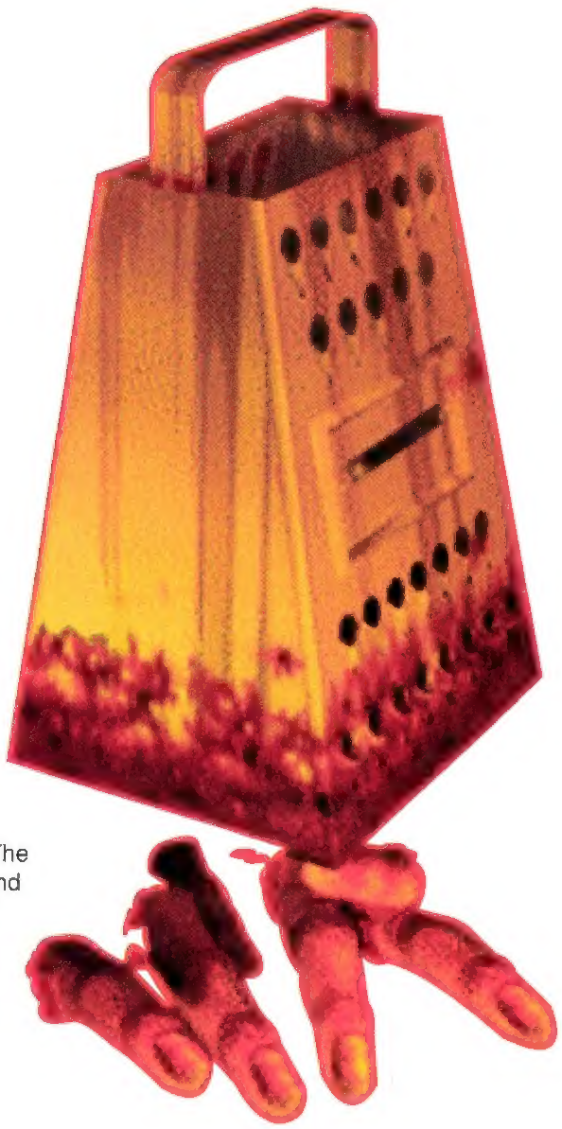

Mmmmm, nothing reminds us of home cookin' quicker than a big heaping pile of freshly ground finger pieces! We can all remember our moms slaving away with the cheese grater to make this special treat for us when we were kids. And with those new-fangled graters, clean-up's a breeze! In all seriousness, the image at the right comes from The Eleventh Hour, Virgin Games and Trilobyte's sequel to the amazing CD-ROM game The 7th Guest. For more information on what's cooking at the Stauf mansion, check out our preview on page 82. Finger sandwiches, anyone?

Guess what's coming for dinner...

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DOIN' TIME ON CAPITOL HILL. . .

Dear **CGR**:

Thank you very much for you column castigating the attempts of our Congress to censor video game violence. Being both a violent game aficionado and hopeful writer/director of action movies, I view the proceedings of our Congress very warily.

It seems to be such a simple realization that violence in entertainment has an almost negligible effect on violence in society. Japan's movies and video games are considerably more violent than here in the U.S. and yet their crime rate is negligible. The problem is that we have jerks like Senator Paul Simon who, rather than focusing on the real problems of violence such as the broken family, lack of jobs, drug abuse and the availability of guns, just want to divert the nation's attention with symbolism over substance.

I have written several Congressmen, and I want to commend you again for your editorial. I hope others who also enjoy violence in entertainment as an outlet and understand that it is not real stand up to these Gestapo agents in our Senate.

Alan Lipton
Syracuse, NY

Video game and computer game violence is the current scapegoat for the "problems of the youth of today." Not too long ago, the decline of the average American kid was attributed to rock music and comic books. What we have is yet another case of people not willing to take responsibility for their own actions.

To relate the wisdom of the many psychology classes I have taken, correlation does not mean causality. Just because two things are related (rise in video game violence and rise in violence of American children) does not mean that one causes the other. It is just as viable to say that since American children have become more violent, they have demanded more violence in their entertainment. It is also valid to say that both video and actual violence are caused by a third factor. Personally, I think they are more than likely two separate phenomena that have happened together.

The American Senate is involved in a witch hunt, and this time, we're the witch. In ten years, the "decline of the youth of today" will be attributed to dangerous sports and music videos or something else.

For the record, I tried to contact both Senators from Illinois, and Paul Simon's office not only got back to me, they got back to me within 24 hours. As of this writing, I have not heard from Carol Mosely Braun.

By the way, singling out one Senator (and the use of the term Gestapo agents) could be construed to being the other end of the same witch hunt (not to be confused with the Rush song).

DOIN' MORE TIME. . .

Dear **CGR**:

I thoroughly enjoyed your editorial on Sex 'N' Violence in the February issue of **Computer Game Review**. Your indignation over government taking over the roles of father and mother in our society is well-founded. Perhaps this increasing encroachment of the governmental authorities into the very fabric of family has led to the decline of the family unit in the United States.

I applaud your long-term memories of Tipper Gore's desire to enslave art and entertainment for the good of the individual. Al Gore-ical use of computer-based town meetings notwithstanding, regulations in these areas can do nothing but harm and further reduce the level of freedom and humanity in our country. The sooner that people rediscover that the individual person is ultimately responsible for his/her actions and not the entertainment software, movie or records that are published, the sooner we will return to an era of individual conscience, responsibility, creativity and production.

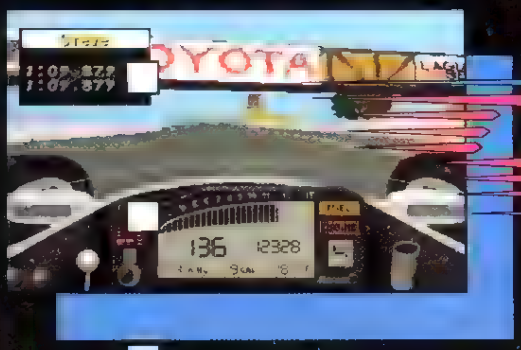
It is interesting that the politicians are now seeking to curtail the last bastion of creative and profitable production now remaining intact in this country.

I also wish that Frank Zappa were alive to add his voice to those speaking out against a further reduction of choice in American life.

Dr. Alfred Giovetti
Catonsville, MD

Our two minds think as one on this point. Signs that people are unwilling to take responsibility for their own actions are omnipresent in America today. Look at some of the ridiculous warning labels on products at every grocery store in the country. Many of those labels are in place because, if they weren't, someone would sue the company. Remember lawn darts? They've been outlawed because an unsupervised young child was severely injured with one and they did not have a warning on them. Anyone in their right mind would realize that an object designed to stick into the ground is potentially dangerous, but the company lost the case.

Slightly tangential, perhaps, but the same thing can be said about games. When will we see the first lawsuit of an enraged parent claiming their child committed suicide because of a video or computer game? It probably won't be long, and the truly frightening aspect of this is that the chances are very good that the game company would lose the case.



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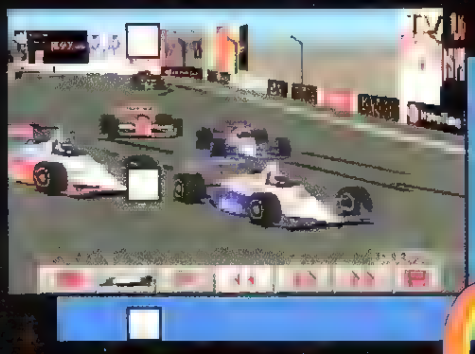

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The CGR Review Breakdown

All numerical scores are based on a 1-100 scale, with scores above 90 indicating a superior effort.

The bar charts at the top of each review reflect how the three reviewers feel the game rates in three different areas. Interface refers to the quality of the control in a game as well as how easy it is to learn the control scheme. Playability is similar, but also reflects level of difficulty, ease of play and other factors. Graphics and sound scores are indications of the reviewer's feelings of the game in that particular area. The playability score reflects the desire for a gamer to replay the game after they have finished it. The overall score is an average of the three reviewers' scores.

Games are played on Myoda 486 computers running at 66 Mhz.

THE CGR REVIEWERS. . .

Kevin: The entire **CGR** office holds its collective breath and ponders the question "Can Kevin stop playing Doom?" Kevin usually finds himself addicted to military simulations and some role-playing games. Not too entranced with most flight sims, Kevin has established himself as the master of strategy in the **CGR** offices, which makes his current gaming addiction all the more curious and out of character.

Ted: The entire **CGR** office holds its collective head in its hands and ponders the question "Can Ted ever stop playing SubWar 2050?" Whenever he hasn't been working this month, he's been dusting enemy subs. While Ted enjoys RPG's and simulations, he's the most at home with a good puzzle game. Sports games often leave him flat. The current hardware guru, Ted can often be seen plugging various cards into our 486 in sometimes frustrated attempts to get them to work properly.

Steve: The entire **CGR** office clenches its collective rear end and ponders the question "Can Steve ever quit replaying X-Wing?" Currently working on his fourth time through the first three tours of duty and his 2nd time through the add-ons, the answer appears to be an emphatic "No way!" He claims he's getting ready for TIE Fighter. Steve likes many simulations, loves a good war game and often relaxes with puzzle games. Action games are one of his first loves though, which may explain his current regression into a game from this time last year.

THREE'S A CHARM. . .

Dear **CGR**:

I disagree strongly with your opinion that video games should not be regulated. First of all, parents cannot watch everything their kids do, where they go, who they associate with, etc. all of the time; especially those single parents out there who have so many responsibilities.

To say teenagers are completely uninfluenced by the glamorization of sex and violence in our society is ridiculous. Every day, kids are being shot and killed and young women are becoming pregnant and having abortions because of the lack of moral values in this country.

In a perfect world, full of responsible people, parents and guardians would discipline their children better.

In order to have a stable civilization, we must have laws, which infringe on our personal rights, that maintain order. Watch the news.

Extremely violent and near-pornographic video games are not the main cause of this problem, but they are certainly a part of the cause.

Kevin O'Connor
Chicago, IL

For the record, I never said I was against the regulation of video and computer games. I did, however, say that I was against the government's regulation of video and computer games.

What we have is a case of whether or not we should limit our technology. Games have not become more violent or more pornographic. X-rated games have existed for a long time (remember Leisure Suit Larry back in the mid-80's). Mortal Kombat is no more violent than Space Invaders. You did, after all, "kill" endless waves of aliens. However, the technology has allowed us to show more graphic violence.

As I stated in my response to the previous letter, just because video violence and actual violence are correlated does not prove that one causes the other. Ask any scientist.

HALF A DOZEN #2's. . .

Dear **CGR**:

On the tip of a sharp pencil is a point. I have six pencils I would like to show. At the tip of the first pencil is the fact that this magazine is, by far, the undisputed leader, and most comprehensive resource, of computer entertainment on the market. And I'm sure I speak for all the readers.

My 2nd and 3rd points are opinions, however, I do feel strongly about them and felt they should surface. It is a rare occasion that I disagree with **CGR**, but for some reason, I failed to see Betrayal at Krondor listed as one of the role-playing games of the year (Feb., '93). I explored the possibility of a typing error, but that didn't seem right. Well, of course, I lost the ability to read properly, no not that either, unless all my roommates couldn't read as well. Then it dawned on me; **CGR** didn't think it was worth nominating for that category. Come now, Betrayal at Krondor deserved better. I fell in love with that game. Unlike other CRPG's, you have to read and think. You really have to know what's going on. And when Gorath dies, you feel like you've lost a best friend. Graphics and sound are great, and as an avid reader of sci-fi and fantasy, it was as if I were acting out a book.

Opinion three regards Rebel Assault. I know it hasn't been reviewed yet, only previewed, but it comes down to this: graphics are phenomenal, sound is incredible and the playability of the game is easily the absolute worst I ever had to deal with. The moral is simple. Watch the introduction and turn it off. Of course, this is just my opinion. Well no, it actually reflects the attitude of my five roommates as well.

Point 4 is a simple request. The classic arcade games are showing up on Windows everywhere. How about an enhanced version of M.U.L.E. for Windows? Yes, I like that idea an awful lot. Let's hope.

Point 5 is a polite demand. Keep the new CD systems out of this magazine. No 3DO, no CD-I, nothing but computers and computer CD-ROM! Please. Thank you.

Last but not least, would someone kindly explain whose dumb idea it was to remove Game Over from this magazine? Very upsetting this is, and I trust this problem will be remedied quickly. Thanks.

By the way, great magazine. I know I said this already, but it deserves to be said again. Keep up the great work. You're unbeatable.

Joe Dima
Tampa, FL

At the other end of a sharp pencil is usually an eraser, so I have six erasers for Joe's six pencil points.

1) Thank you.

2) Yes, BAK was a great CRPG. Personally, I wasn't sold on the graphic style, but it was very entertaining. You

will notice that it did make Kevin's personal top ten for the year. By the way, if you haven't read Raymond Feist's books on which Krondor is based, hunt through your local bookstore for Magician, Silverthorn and A Darkness and Sethanon. They are must-reads.

3) Rebel Assault does have some playability problems, but they can be worked out. We've gotten pretty far in the game. By the way, a review of said game can be found on page 106 of our February, 1994 issue.

4) Yes, that would be good. Check out the review section for an update on a golden oldie new from SSI.

5) CD-I coverage will continue, and we are still looking at 3DO. Keep the letters coming, folks.

*6) The blame (or credit, depending on how you felt about the Game Over section) for the lack of Game Overs in **CGR** falls squarely on my shoulders. Opinions on its exclusion have been mixed. You never know, it might make a comeback someday. For more on Game Over, read on.*

Bring Back Game Over. . .

Dear **CGR**:

I just looked at the January, 1994 issue of **Computer Game Review** and was instantly impressed with all the improvements you guys have made to the **CGR** features. You all have out done yourselves this year. It would be difficult for me to describe how impressive your new design looks now, but let me put it this way: if there was an award for Best Magazine Upgrade of the Year, your magazine would win it hands down, that is, if you return and improve the Game Over page to the feature table. I will discuss the reasons why later.

Each improvement made the magazine more impressive and more fun to read and collect. The most effective improvements were made in the Reviews and Strategy features. I especially enjoyed the new "feature" in the Strategies: the most valuable tips needed to pass the reviewed game are now printed in the black margins on the far side of the page. That does not mean that I did not enjoy the rest of this issue. In fact, I enjoyed them all. In a word, all the features were, well, excellent! A job well done, **CGR** staff. Keep up the good work and I will keep buying.

Now for the flip side of the coin; why did you eliminate Game Over from the new design? I was shocked when I noticed it was missing from the January, 1994 issue. Come on, guys. Please don't tell me that the Game Over feature does not fit will with the new design. Au contrare! I think it will add more life to the magazine. You want good reasons why it should be reinstalled at the end of the magazine? How about three. . .

One: To me, the Game Over feature symbolizes more than just a few screen shots and a brief description of the final level of the computer game; it also symbolizes the end of a hard-won battle with a popular game after hundreds of hours playing and drinking perhaps 20 to 30 cups of coffee. It shows the rewards and triumph of a dedicated computer game who never gives up. This feature can also give veteran game players a good reason to look back in their closet for any old RPG games they own and abandoned long ago. It will add new spice to these "golden oldies" games.

Two: The Game Over page adds the final knock-out punch to the contents of an excellent magazine. Your issue starts with reviews, photos and tips of the latest games on the market and keeps the suspense up to the very end of the magazine with pictures and a description of what waits at the end of one of the games reviewed in an earlier issue. As far as I am concerned, your magazine is the only one that shows the completion of a computer game and that alone makes your issue worth buying.

Three: I don't find any reason why the Game Over feature should be discontinued. You have plenty of computer games to show us the end of. I even checked the Postage Due column in past issues for anyone who has complained about the feature and found none

What makes it very disappointing is that there wasn't any forewarning the the Game Over feature was going to be removed from the magazine in 1994. Steve Honeywell didn't mention the possibility of dropping this feature in the new 1994 format in his Initialize columns in both this month's and the December, 1993 issues.

In any case, I hope you guys can try to bring back the Game Over feature to the new format. If it is not possible, I will keep buying, but you will have on disappointed magazine reader (and future subscriber) on your conscience.

Raul Romo
Los Angeles, CA

Little did I think that the omission of the Game Over column would attract such a response. As it stands now, the decision to axe the column was mainly mine, and that decision does stand. However, as we have shown in the past, we are more than willing to change our coverage or our format to bring it in line with what the readers want. Game Over may be back, although probably not for a couple of months at least. Let us know what you want.

Not everyone agrees with you on our new look. Read on.

Headlines and Headaches. . .

Dear **CGR**:

It is the Monday after Christmas and I had a hunch that the January issue would be in the mailbox. Sure enough, there was my warm copy to help ease this bitter cold *(and it was just about as bitterly cold here, too. -ed)*. It did not take long after I began my reading ritual, with coffee in hand, that I was feeling like I had just installed the latest in a series of games only to find a completely different interface. Your previous issue suggested that changes were coming, like software companies boast of improvements made on upcoming sequels.

As I sit here at the helm of the new **CGR**, I find myself flying aimlessly; lost in space.

Right from the get-go, the **CGR** Contents begins my confusing journey. There is a series of screen snapshots with page numbers to their right. The short captions which once followed below each picture are gone. Now I find myself cross-referencing the index with the pictures. It took me a couple of seconds to realize that the text hyping the picture for Daemonsgate was not connected to the page numbers and snapshots adjacent to its left.

Realizing that my navigational equipment had gone buggy, I had hoped familiar sights would save me from getting lost.

Big headlines caught my eye, "Football, Chinese Food and WC II vs. X-Wing." I thought, "Hmmm, what's this? Oh, it's Postage Due," instead of saying "Ah, here's Postage Due, what are the topics this month?"

I moved on to the first review to find big headlines again, where I once turned a page and the first thing I saw was the game title (Many of the headlines do not even have the game title in them). After a couple of minutes finding myself thinking that this SimCity 2000 looks pretty good, I squint and noticed that the lead review is for Macs. I know the Mac users have been after you to get more reviews, but this is ridiculous. Like most subscribers, I renew year-after-year to

see what's up with the IBM games. My suggestion is if the Mac market has grown so much that it gets the first review in you magazine, you should consider doing a Mac issue or make it a separate section here. Even with just a couple of Mac reviews per issue, I am sure most readers have had this experience; "Hey, this looks pretty cool. . . read. . .read. . .read. . .(pull out magnifying glass), Oh, Available for: Macintosh).

Most people cannot play both formats, so why mix them together?

So now after a universe of headlines where it can become difficult to distinguish between Review and Advertisement, I find myself sailing past Hardware, Add-ons, Child Support, etc. . ., to arrive at **CGR** Previews. A thin black column lines the page. My eyes rocking back and forth reading lines that consist of as few words as two. I finally give up as my ship begins to break up and eject out here into space where I have found more than enough time to write to you. I glance over to the cover and read, "New and Improved for '94!"

I do not know what brought upon these "improvements," but as an avid reader of your column, I cannot recall the flood of letters that demanded such drastic and inferior changes.

Mike Deni
Rochester, NY

*Those readers who have been with **Computer Game Review** from the start will note that our January, 1994 issue is really the first major overhaul since the beginning. Other redesigns of **CGR** had been more or less moving colors around, while this year, we decided to do something big. As such, we knew that there would be people out there who didn't like the new look. You are correct in stating that there was no major upwelling of desire from readers that we change our look. We felt that after 29 issues of doing things in effectively the same way with only minor changes, it was time to do something different.*

I am sorry you don't like the new format, Mike, but we feel that it makes the magazine more readable, allows the reader to get information more quickly and allows us a little more freedom with the overall design. The response on the new design has been, as I predicted, mixed, but those in favor outnumber those against by about a 5-to-1 margin.

In short, don't look for a return to the old style of doing things any time soon. It is entirely possible (although not necessarily likely) that the January 1995 issue could be a return to the style of 1993. That should be a warning to anyone out there, by the way. Tradition has been that we do some sort of redesign work (major as was this year or minor as was the year before) in the January issue of each year. Jan. '95 could be quite different from Dec. '94. Time will tell.

Could it Be Postage Due Without X-Wing v. WC II?. . .

Dear **CGR**:

I've tried to keep calm, I've tried to keep my opinion to myself, but I can no longer sit back without my say, and God knows I'm sure you have enough of these letters, but here it goes. . .Wing Commander II is by far one of the best games EVER to be put out on the PC. Yes, X-Wing has better graphics, better control and better sound, but let's look at the whole picture. For example, a car today has better handling, better control, better sound systems and a better look, but does that take anything away from the classics such as the '56 Chevy and the Ford Mustang? If you say no, then how can we compare the new X-Wing, with better graphics, sound and control, to the classics such as Wing Commander II (Wing Commander I was one heck of a game, too). Sure, it's not as nice looking as X-Wing, but it is also three years old. A game that was the foundation of games today, the father of simulations, the mother of action, this was the game that had me itching for more. This is the game that got me to throw away my 286 for a 486. For the people out there who say Wing Commander doesn't even compare to X-Wing, all I can say is that I'll take a Ford Mustang over anything they have today. Thank you, Chris Roberts, for one hell of a game.

X-Wing is a great game, and I love it, so don't get me wrong. I just think we have to judge fairly.

Joe Folley
Hanford, CA

Who out there can disagree with what Joe has to say? Well, I can think of a few people. First of all, let me make my position clear for those who don't know it or are new to this debate in Postage Due. I thought, without a doubt, Wing Commander II was by far the best game released in 1991. I also thought that X-Wing was, by far and without a doubt the best game released in 1993. I love and have loved both games. I prefer X-Wing (I gave it a 96 in my review; I gave WC II a 95), but that does not detract from the fact that WC II was one of the most pivotal games of recent note.

However, I would not consider WC II the "father of simulations." when games like Harpoon, Elite, Falcon, SWOTL, Red Baron and too many others to count came out before Wing Commander II. Again, this doesn't detract from its greatness in the least. I lost a lot of hours blowing up Kilrathi ships.

As far as the question of how people can compare the two, maybe what you say makes perfect sense, Joe, but people are going to make comparisons just the same. Your beloved Mustang, I guarantee you, is compared both favorably and unfavorably to other cars on a daily basis.

Listen to any sports talk show on the radio. Someone, almost any day of the week and, from my experience, around the clock, will want to make comparisons between one player and another or one team and another, especially if those players or teams did not ever play against each other. As an example, I offer you the case of the last three years in Chicago's professional basketball team's history. If I hear another yokel call up a sports show and want to compare the three-peat Bulls with the eight-peat Celtics or the three-peat Lakers, I'm going to hurl. Or if I hear about comparisons between the two-time Super Bowl champ Cowboys against the '85 Bears again, I will scream. A current argument that can be heard around the Sendai offices concerns what the best beer in the world is. Anyone who knows anything about beer will tell you that comparing a Pilsner with a stout is like comparing the proverbial apples and oranges, but compare we do. (For the record, my vote for beer is torn between Pilsner Urquell from Czechoslovakia and Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout, a British import, while Ted's is a tie between Chicago-brewed Goose Island Honker's Ale and Goose Island Lincoln Park Lager. Kevin doesn't drink beer, and thus votes for vodka or Diet Coke.)

Anyone who has an interest in a particular subject, be it a sport or a genre of gaming, usually has an interest in determining the "best ever." Besides, it gives people something to talk about that's usually a little more interesting than the weather. While in theory, I agree with your stance, in practice, it's almost unavoidable, especially as a critic who has to put numerical values on a variety of products. I hope that explains away your pain and suffering.

Have a good month, everybody, and I'll talk at you again in 30 days.

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You are B.J. Blazkowicz' last descendant.

Kick butt and take names like Beelzebub in the new 3-D action game Doom from Id.

The Nazis are long dead back at Castle Wolfenstein. B.J. Blazkowicz has been given a full hero's burial. But his memory lives on in you, and you'd best get ready to call on his genetic imprint.

A few years ago you had something of a disagreement with a superior officer, landing him in a full body cast and you at the Earth base on Mars. Your time is spent cleaning the military station there and watching restricted movies in the rec room.

Doom
by Id Software

Game Summary
Doom is a fully scrolling 3-D action game. Kill interdimensional beasties while collecting multiple flavors of power-ups and weapons, then kill more beasties.

Overall Rating: 92%

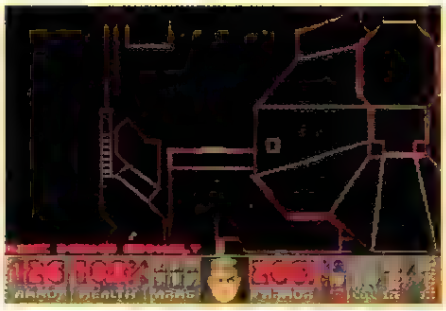
Requirements:	386, 4MB RAM, VGA
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib Roland
Controller:	Keyboard, mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Id Software
Distributed by:	FormGen
Retail Price:	$40.00
Hard Drive Space:	16 Meg
No. of Players:	One player(1 to 4 network)

Just another lazy day on Phobos, killing interdimensional mutants.

The Union Aerospace Corporation is a conglomerate with research stations on Mars and its two moons, Phobos and Deimos. For the last four years, the military has used these stations to conduct secret experiments on interdimensional space travel. Two gates have been established, one on each moon; lately there have been reports of instability between the gates, though. Military "volunteers" entering them have either disappeared entirely or returned hopelessly insane. Those who have returned do so spewing vulgarities, bludgeoning anything that moves, and, ultimately, exploding. Matching heads with torsos has become a full-time position (imagine the job description). The latest reports stated that there had been setbacks, but that everything was under control. Until a few hours ago, that is.

That's when a frantic call for help was received by the base on Mars from Phobos. "We require immediate military support!" it said. "Something evil is coming out of the Gateways! Computer systems have gone berserk!" The rest was incoherent, save for the sound of suddenly clogged throat passages. Deimos simply vanished from the sky. Since then, attempts to establish contact with either moon have been unsuccessful.

Demons are not nice. Kill them with whatever firepower you're packing.



Maps are the key to your survival. Everybody go to the bathroom before we leave!

You and your squadron are the only combat troops for fifty million miles, and you now stand on the surface of Phobos. Your assignment was to patrol and secure the perimeter of the base while the main body of your squad assaulted whatever attackers were inside. For several hours, you picked up the sounds of combat: guns firing, men yelling orders, screams, bones cracking. Now your radio emits only static and silence.

Taking stock of your situation, you realize it's not good. You'll never be able to get off this asteroid-sized chunk of rock on your own, and all the decent

Have a good time at the prom, sweetheart! Don't forget your Semi-automatic pistol!

weapons were carried into the main station by your buddies, leaving you with only a pistol. If you expect to stay alive, you'll have to secure better weapons inside the station; whatever's in there may soon be out here. You secure your helmet and exit the landing pod, flicking the safety off on your pistol as you go. There's sure as hell going to be an accounting...

Oh, to have a beer and the BFG-9000 right about now.

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
92	90	89	88	93

This was a game I expected to be very tepid about. I mean, Castle Wolfenstein was never more than a boring little shooter to me (plus the scrolling made me physically sick). Then we get the much bally-hooed Doom in, I pop it in, and I'm impossibly hooked. This game is so addictive, so enthralling, that it is difficult to stop playing long enough to write this review. I can't even mention an action/adventure that's this engrossing. I played the first mission over and over again until we got the full version in; I've memorized the early levels entirely. I've made it through using finesse and a minimum of ammo. I've made it through using only hand-to-hand combat. I've made it through on Ultra-Violence without saving at all. I've made it through making par on each level (a screaming ride, let me tell you!) What can I say? I'm a Doom addict. Don't try it without a fast machine. Don't try it without a good sound card and speakers. Don't try it with easily impressionable children nearby (or easily impressionable adults, for that matter). But if you have these things (or even if you don't), you owe it to yourself to look at this game, even if you thought you'd hate it. What the heck? It's free, at least the first mission. Who can argue with a huge, violent game that's free? Just download the shareware version, or get it from a friend. You won't regret it, but you may regret the lost hours. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
91	93	89	91	94

Id Software has done it again. Doom is the game that has been lighting up the major BBS' for about the last three months, and now you can play it, too. It's well worth playing: the graphics are good, but it's the 3-D scrolling that really blew me away. Sound is very good, especially so if you can lay your hands on the Doom sound editor (shareware from Bill Neisius). While the various grunts and groans that come with the game are satisfying, the WAV files supplied by this gentleman are much funnier. I played this game dawn to dusk for about four days; I cut back only because I started seeing game play in my dreams. If you played Wolfenstein 3-D (and who didn't?), you already know the interface; it's amazingly simple. The only place I can really take away points is for the game's overall storyline: I found Wolfenstein to be a better game only because it's much more satisfying to blow away silicon Nazis than it is to exterminate Wookies. I also dislike the automap; it takes away the overwhelming feeling of panic inculcated by Wolfenstein (have I been here already?). However, Doom is a much different game than Wolfenstein in its look and film noir feel, and for that I'll tack on some innovation points. The number and diversity of power-ups and weapons gain Doom some points as well; the chainsaw is a great weapon and I use it often. Trust me, you'll want it in your arsenal. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
88	92	91	89	92

Doom is sort of a turbocharged Wolf 3-D, which is okay since both games are made by the same talented staff. Instead of taking place inside a Nazi fortress, Doom occurs in what looks like the very halls of Hell. The action is fast and furious and is good for hours of fun. This time you have more weapons, more things to pick up (although no treasure) and more enemies to shoot. I love the chainsaw for that personal touch on a kill. What Doom lacks, however, is the charm that made Wolf 3-D such a roaring success. The difference is quite subtle, but it can be best summed up with the idea that in Doom, you have more firepower, a map, armor, the ability to get to 199% health, and more. Wolf was simple, and while Doom retains much of that simplicity, it is more complex. It's also more of a player's game--the map helps you find secret doors, for instance. While Doom is plenty hard, Wolf 3-D was harder, and that challenge is what made it fun. Don't get me wrong, folks. For a mindless romp of blood and brutality, there is little that can compare with the glory that is Doom. It's loads of fun, whether you play it normally, with the new sounds available (where are my pants?) or with the ever-present Id cheat codes. It'll remain on the hard drive for a long time and we'll keep playing it, but while I don't wish to sound like my parents, I yearn for the simpler times of Wolf 3-D. ***-Steve***

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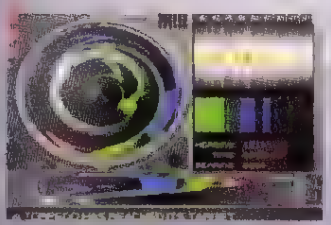
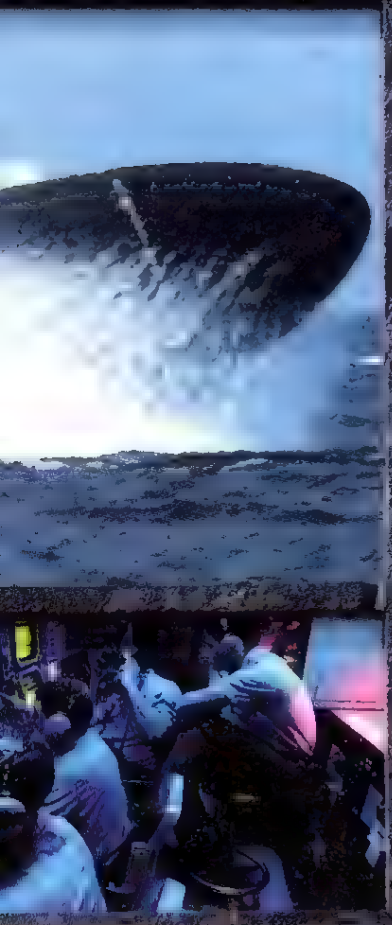
You'll hear the eerie high-pitched whine of torpedoes as they home

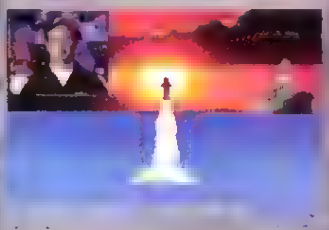


in on their targets. The menacing drone of a destroyer passing overhead.



And damage reports from the mouths of crewmen praying they'll live to enjoy another liberty call.

Of course, it pays to



keep your eyes open, too. SSN-21 SeaWolf™ features color motion video, 3-D underwater mapping, and vivid digitized images of more than 50 real-world ships and aircraft.

Now, take a final breath of fresh air and dive into a world where good hearing is your greatest asset.

L LOOKS LIKE. BUT WE'LL
D IDEA HOW IT SOUNDS.

Sure, it'll test your nerves. But what were you expecting, the Love Boat?

ELECTRONIC ARTS

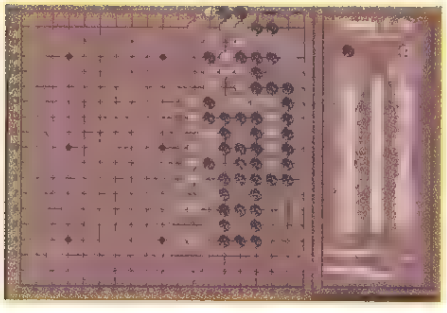
Enjoy five classic games of strategy and guile.

Trust history—more people have spent more time playing these games than any others.

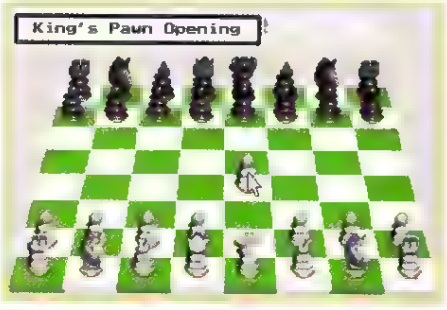
For gamers with a classical taste, five easy-to-play, hard-to-master strategy games have been imported to the PC, together in one package.

Enjoy the strategic skills required by Backgammon, a head-to-head game that's been a favorite of thinking players since the seventeenth century. Select aggressive or defensive styles of play for your computerized opponent. Take back and replay moves, change play speeds, double and even save games for completion later.

Try your hand at Go, the national game of Japan. An uninhabited land stretches out before you, bounded only by sea. But an opponent will challenge your right to the board. Surround and capture his stones before yours are lost.



Test your purely strategic capacities with the ancient game of Go.



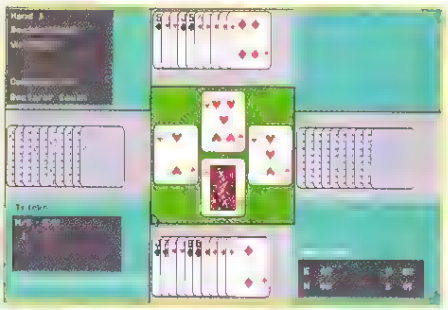
View chess in either this 3-D mode or in a 2-D mode with notations taken.

Perhaps the best known of the strategy games, chess carries with it centuries of tradition and styles. Play it against beginners or grandmaster levels of skill. Choose between a 3-D naturalistic view of the board, or a hard analytical 2-D version complete with classical notation. The computer will allow taking back and replaying of moves, saving games and even will offer a hint if asked.

Bridge, the classic strategy game of cards, also offers take back and replay options–something you'll rarely be able to talk your opponents into. Use a variety of bidding conventions, or view all four hands to try various strategies. There'll always be four for bridge.

Checkers is gaining respect as a time-honored game of strategy as well. Use the "set up board" option to experiment, or play a game against the strong algorithms of the AI. Players of all ages can readily understand, if not master, this classic game.

All five games use a simple point-and-click interface and include save options for each game as well as on-line help.



Practice your bridge game with the benefit of replays and viewing all hands.

The Classic 5
by Interplay

Game Summary

A collection of five classic strategy games: chess, checkers, go, bridge and backgammon. Play all five with various options including strength of opponents and move replays.

Overall Rating: 72%

Requirements:	EGA, 640K 286/10, Hard Drive
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster and compatibles
Controller:	Keyboard, Mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Interplay
Distributed by:	Interplay
Retail Price:	$49.95
Hard Drive Space:	3.5 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
86	80	68	32	80

C5 is decidedly mediocre. Collections like this need one of two attributes to succeed: strong AI and game play, or lots of flashy graphics and nifty features. C5 has neither. While I'm certainly no expert at these games, the AI struck me as fairly poor even on the stronger settings. I somnambulated my way to a draw against the strongest setting on Chess, and I'm only a fair player. The graphics are strictly utilitarian, and the sound is a nonentity. Mild music plays on the opening screens, but the system beep is all you'll ever hear in the games themselves. C5 is fine for people who don't really care about these games, but experts will be profoundly disappointed. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
70	81	81	76	79

The Classic 5 Funpack is certainly no expert's vision of challenging competition, but Interplay has put together a nice and solid collection of games. The chess AI, while certainly not up to the level of play that a Cray might provide, is certainly as good as many of the portable electronic chess games on the market. Bridge is a nice diversion, despite the need for more and better bidding strategies. Go had very erratic in its AI, while the backgammon AI was stable as a rock (and just as easy to beat). Checkers is incredibly easy to stalemate, but Interplay doesn't include a "declare stalemate" option; this is very frustrating. Given its due, this is a good beginner's package. ***-Ted***

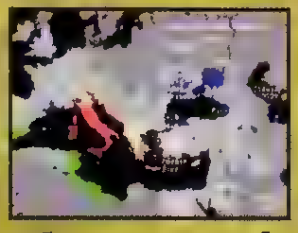
Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
76	85	70	55	78

When trying to think of the proper adjective to describe Classic 5, the term "ho-hum" springs to mind, both to describe the game and my mood after playing it. The games themselves are decent versions of each classic contest, but in each case, there are better ones out there. If you are a die-hard lover of one particular game (chess, for instance), avoid this and buy a specific title. If, on the other hand, you have some desire at all to play more than one of these games at any given time, you could do a lot worse. As a whole, it's a decent package, but taken individually, the five titles are sort of drab and boring. Backgammon is the best, but it's also a personal favorite. ***-Steve***

You can play war games or you can make history.

Hannibal takes history out of the books and into your PC. Experience the life and times of one of history's most controversial heros. You are Hannibal. Think his thoughts, fight his battles, befriend his allies and negotiate his treaties. Do everything as he did, or dare to do more.

- Based upon the actual history of Roman and Carthagan campaigns.
- 700 towns, each a possible friend or foe.
- Go to market to equip your army with horses, ships, mercenaries and elephants.
- Keep tabs on the political situation: don't raise tax rates too high or you may suffer the consequences.
- Negotiate peace or seige and destroy to increase your finances.
- Includes historical survey of Hannibal and his times.



Can you conquer the powerful Roman Empire?

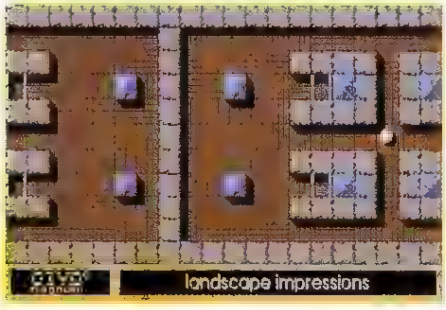
Developed by Starbyte Software
Published by **MICROLEAGUE interactive software**
U.O.P., 201 Bellevue Building, Newark, DE 19702
1-800-334-6572

Get to know your mouse better than you ever did.

Oxyd magnum! is a game to test your eye-hand coordination as well as your mouse driver.

Oxyd magnum! is more than just a marble maze; it's a world of endless variations of brain-teasing labyrinths that will leave you stumped, stunned, and whimpering like a beaten dog. Your goal is to find all of the hidden Oxyds (small multicolored jewels hidden in blue pyramids) by rolling, hopping and bumping your way through the landscape while using any hints or tools you can find along the way. You must be swift and steady, but be careful! Quicksand, chasms and other treacherous perils await any false move you might make.

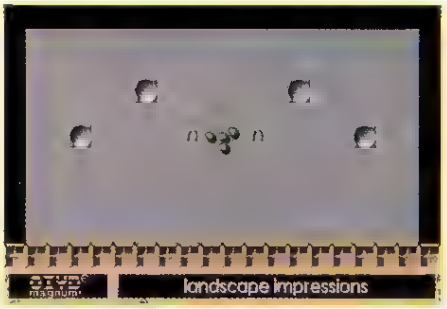
A game of skill and memory, the object is to not just find each individual Oxyd in the labyrinth; you must find matching pairs. If the second pyramid you open contains an Oxyd that does not match the Oxyd in the first pyramid, the first pyramid will close while the second remains open. Find all the matching pairs and you are victorious on that level; don't get too caught up in celebrating though, as there are one hundred levels in all.



One of the unusual yin/yang levels. Control both black and white marbles simultaneously.

Lasers can help you accomplish your task or fry you on the spot.

Among the tools you will encounter along the way are dynamite, sledgehammers, swords, springs, and umbrellas. The landscapes you will have to maneuver through will have ice (some thinner than the rest), quicksand, stone and wood, as well as pits that will spell your certain destruction if you wander too close. Every tenth level is proclaimed a meditation level; if you have ever played one of those little lucite-sealed games where you have to get several balls in their respective holes, you have a good idea of what these levels are like. There are also yin/yang levels where there will be two marbles on the board, one black and one white. Using the switching tool, you must discover the best way (sometimes the only way) to solve these labyrinths.



The object of meditation levels is to get one marble in each crater.

Oxyd magnum!
by Dongleware

Game Summary
Maneuver your marbles through a seemingly endless hostile terrain while trying to find matching pairs of Oxyds. Try to avoid getting gruesomely killed in the process.

Overall Rating: 87%

Requirements:	386, 256-color VGA, 2MB RAM, DOS 5
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib
Controller:	Mouse
Available for:	PC, Macintosh
Designed by:	Meinolf Schneider
Distributed by:	Dongleware
Retail Price:	$59.95
Hard Drive Space:	<1 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
87	83	84	76	82

Oxyd is an intriguing mix of Concentration and Marble Madness. It combines two things I usually dislike: exact reflexes and logic puzzles. Normally, these concepts combine poorly and frustratingly; in Oxyd, however, much effort is made to keep the game from being too frustrating without being too easy. Even if you lose all your lives, you merely have to start that level over. Oxyd is illustrative of that elusive concept so rarely found in gaming today: true originality. The game is literally like no other I have seen; it's fresh, amusing and requires hefty nonlinear thinking. The hundred levels will keep you busy, and the originality will make you show it to your friends. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
89	92	91	77	88

Despite the common perception that mouse-controlled games are usually extremely ill-conceived, Oxyd magnum! is a game I like much more than I thought I would, mainly because it combines Concentration-like memory skills with the reflexes of a cat. While there are some boards I could really do without, most of the levels are well-engineered. I particularly enjoy the meditation levels: you must be perceptive of at least four separate marbles at the same time. One thing that you cannot be without on this game (and here's where I take away most of my points) is a really good mouse and driver. Try to lay your paws on a MS or Honeywell mouse, if you can. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
86	89	87	82	92

Good puzzle games are one of the most under-appreciated joys in the world. By that mark, Oxyd is vastly under-appreciated. The original shareware is a classic. The new levels have added much to this game. Control is surprisingly good; I figured that with the mouse controlling a marble-like object, I'd soon be flying mercilessly across the screen as per Marble Madness. Wrong! You can do that, if you wish, but you can also control the marble with delicate precision. What makes the game, though, is not the crisp graphics, the nice sounds, the interesting power-ups or the good control. What makes this worth playing is that the puzzles are addictive and tough. ***-Steve***

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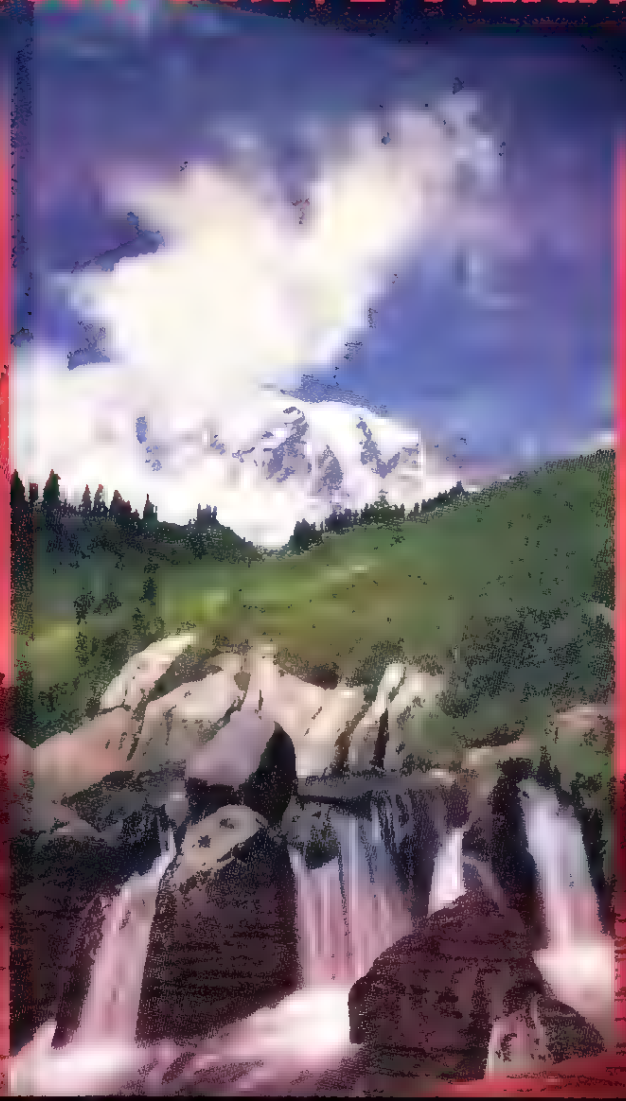

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EXPLORE THE DARKER SIDE OF CYBERSPACE.

DISCOVER A NEW WORLD FILLED WITH DANGER AND EXCITEMENT—AND ROGUE CYBERCRAFT OUT TO KILL YOU.

Jack into a brave new world. This realm of cyberspace is not for the timid, however. Don't come here unless you feel ready to handle nanosecond pressure from powerful enemies who treacherously watch you to learn your every move. Then, when you least expect it, they'll turn you to dust. Customize your vehicle to maximize your score and skills, or take a stock tank out for a spin.

In this sequel to the original Spectre, you'll be soaring above the action in your advanced, transforming cybercraft. They are plenty of new enemies to deal with, like slicers, cloaked robots, flying hunter-killers, gauntlets of orbiters and smart acid pools. Of course, you'll have new weapons to deal with them as well—weapons like pulse bursts, spinners, smart missiles, proximity mines, cyberblasts and scattershots.

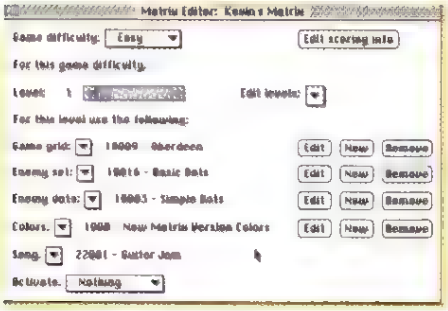
Confused about where you are? Go to the top-down view and look around.

Cyberspace knows no mercy. Eliminate the Rogues as quickly as possible.

Spectre VR contains all new graphics and texture mapped VR realism, including portions of live action video throughout the entire game world. There are plenty of game play innovations as well, like escaping through transporter gates and dropping down into negative cyberspace. Watch out for the deadly cybermud and moving walls; try not to encounter the ICE. Maze levels abound, gauging your intelligence as well as your accuracy.

Tired of the levels that come with the game? Build your own with VRchitect. Specify the number and power of the opposition. Build fiendish mazes. Govern everything about the level, even the music played.

Network game play has been enhanced as well. Up to eight players can participate cooperatively or competitively (using Multizone Apple Talk) in over a dozen scenarios, including Cyber Dogfight, Strafe City, Maze Rally, Bitball, SuperArena and SuperSoccer.



Alter the realm as much as you wish using VRchitect. Edit or create new worlds.

Spectre VR
by Velocity

Game Summary
Zoom around a polygon world in a cybertank. Playing alone, you can just capture the flag against powerful enemies; on a network, play against friends in a variety of games.

Overall Rating: 81%

Requirements:	Classic or later, Hard Disk System 6.0.7, 2 Meg RAM
Sound Support:	N/A
Controller:	Keyboard
Available for:	Macintosh
Designed by:	Green Dragon Creations
Distributed by:	Velocity Development
Retail Price:	$37.95
Hard Drive Space:	5 Meg
No. of Players:	1 player (1-8 on network)

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
84	84	88	93	81

This is probably a much better game on the network than it is as a stand-alone. I know people who are mindlessly addicted to the original Spectre; if this is the case for you, run out now and get a look at this. For the rest of us, Spectre VR is Battlezone for the Nineties. The music is stirring, and there's plenty of action—but it's pretty simplistic action. Capture the flag is all you can do alone, and that pales for me fairly quickly. The feature that saves this game from the trash heap for me is the VRchitect. Being able to design my own levels appeals to the fiendish designer in me; now I can create new devilishments for those hapless souls who are addicted to this game. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
84	84	82	79	94

Spectre VR: Battlezone with better colors. I never played the original Spectre, so I can't even hope to draw a comparison there. The graphics are all line-drawn solids against a black background: the objective of each level is simplistic in the extreme. The only form of unguent to be found in this game are the level designer, which can put maniacal twists in the game, and the ability to network it. I think this game would be incredibly good on a net, but as a stand-alone it didn't rattle my chain. As a diversion from the hum-drum, this game is good for about thirty minutes on your own; as a mainstream stay-up-all-night-to-get-some-more-licks-in solo game, it falls flat. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
87	88	87	94	91

If you don't currently work or play on a network, don't buy this game. It isn't that it's not good, it's simply that by yourself, what you can do is too limited to be worth the price. If, however, you can network up and take out some of your friends, by all means check it out. Graphics are smooth and the various views are a big help. The music is truly killer, folks! In fact, the tunes are almost worth the price of admission. Another handy toy is the VRchitect, since it allows you to stick other people into the most fiendish situations you can devise. For network play, this is a game that's hard to top, at least for the Mac. For a stand-alone system, look elsewhere. ***-Steve***

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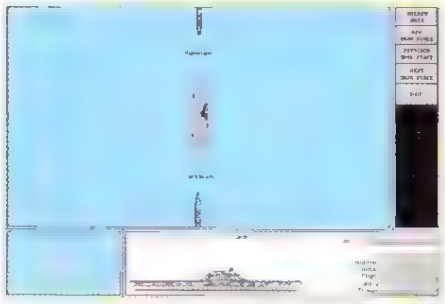
The original US/Japanese trade war rages on.

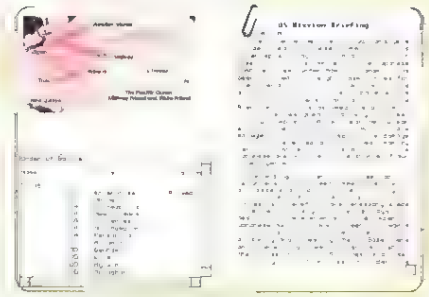
But what happens after that is up to you as you take command of the U.S. or Japan in the Pacific.

The U.S. Fleet lies largely in ruin in Pearl Harbor. How will the war proceed from there? Will the wounded U.S. Navy recover in time to launch a counterstrike against the Japanese? Or could a few more successes on the high seas lead the Imperial Japanese Navy to the shores of California?

Find out in Victory at Sea. How much difference would your leadership have made for either side at Leyte Gulf, the largest battle of the Pacific War? Can you prevent the huge Japanese losses at Midway (four carriers, crippling the offensive capability of the IJN), or conversely worsen them? Guadalcanal tests the combined forces of land and sea in a deadly battle for every step of ground.



Examine each ship under your command individually, assessing all factors.

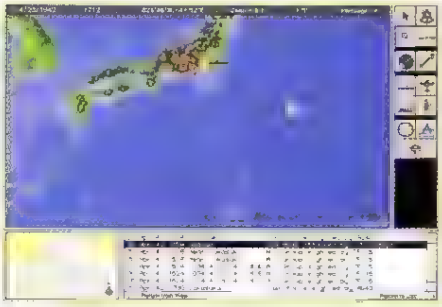


Read over your briefing. Questions? Click on a highlighted term to learn more.

Or take the greatest challenge of all–commanding the full might of the USN or the IJN for the entire war. Will events force another Midway or Leyte, or can your alternative strategy swing the war?

Before the battle, look over a full historical briefing. Direct questions to the enclosed on-line Gamebook, which includes additional historical information as well as numerous period photos. During the fighting, receive battle, signal intelligence and communication reports. Control the composition and formation of task forces under your command. Not happy with a commander's performance? Demote or reassign him and promote another in his place.

Logistics play a part as well. Make the decisions to stockpile resources. Protect vital merchant shipping lines. Victory at Sea incorporates logistic, production and political models as well as combat. Full motion video sequences of actual Pacific war footage accompany many actions during game play, as well as fully-digitized sound and music. Can you face the test of history?



Sift through the intelligence reports as Doolittle's Raid approaches Japan.

Victory at Sea
by Three-Sixty Pacific

Game Summary

Take command of the Pacific theatre in World War II. Fight both historical and hypothetical battles as either side, or handle the entire war as a campaign.

Overall Rating: 84%

Requirements:	12" color display, LC 4 Meg RAM, Hard Drive
Sound Support:	N/A
Controller:	Mouse
Available for:	Macintosh
Designed by:	James F. Dunnigan
Distributed by:	Broderbund
Retail Price:	$69.95
Hard Drive Space:	11 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
83	81	87	83	73

VAS is the kind of detailed historical war simulation that turns newcomers away from wargaming. While admirable in almost all salient aspects of computer gaming (clear graphics, atmospheric sound, simple and flexible interface) and historical warfare (excellent on-line glossary, collection of most important naval battles of WW2), the whole package lacks a necessary spark. It excels within its well-defined boundaries, but does not reach beyond them, doesn't pull the player in. It's hard to get into the battles; the only conflicts that the player has real control over occur in the full campaign game, which is a tremendous undertaking. VAS is very professional, but uninspiring. ***-Kevin***

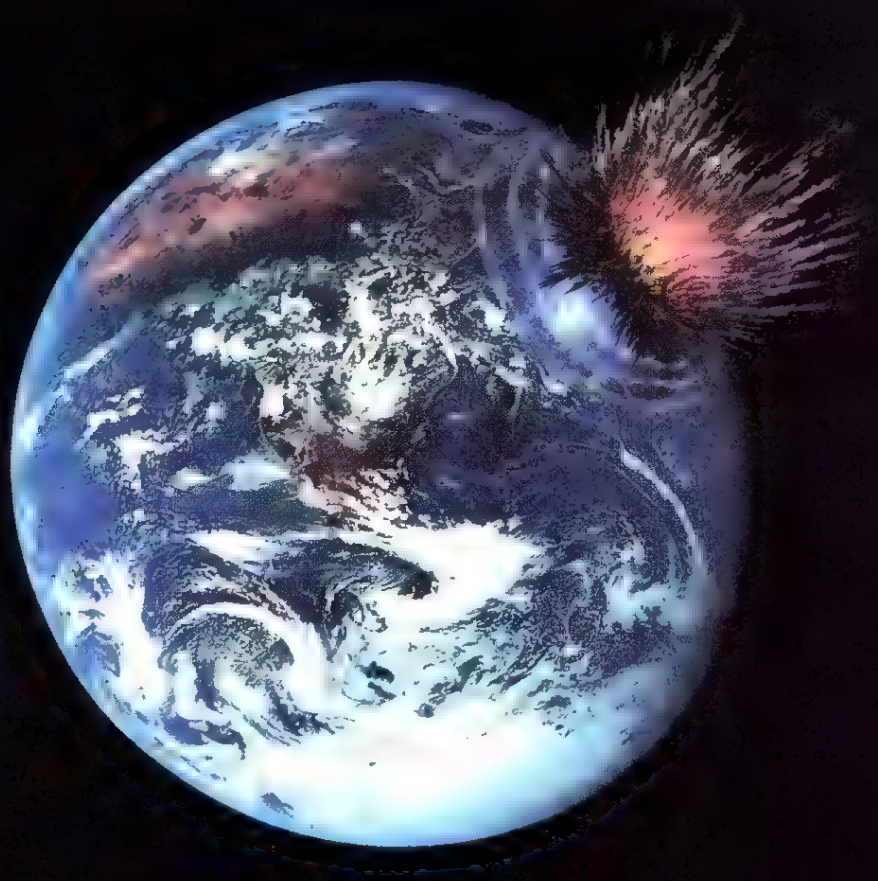
Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
81	88	89	88	90

VAS is best described as "pleasant." The graphics are pleasant, the sound is pleasant, the game play is pleasant. This is not to say that the game isn't fun; it is. A certain amount of thought is required to place your forces to achieve victory; the trouble comes when trying to implement the actions resulting from that thought. I thought the interface could use a bit of adjustment; it's a real pain to not be able to pause giving orders so that you can take a look at the map and determine a course of action, then return to giving those orders. Naval war buffs will probably love this game; it includes several scenarios that could have developed, but never did. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
81	83	79	75	91

I had some initial problems with the control of Victory at Sea, but once I learned the importance of double-clicking, this was no longer much trouble. The number of scenarios included creates considerable lasting play value. The main problem with this title is its overall blandness. Winning or losing a scenario brings up a screen (whee!) and that's about it. Graphics are slightly better than most military sims, but not a lot. While the game is sort of sterile, there is also nothing really wrong with it. I can't think of any major improvements on design. If you've played and enjoyed other Three-Sixty military sims, you'll find a lot more of the same style and quality here. ***-Steve***

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD.



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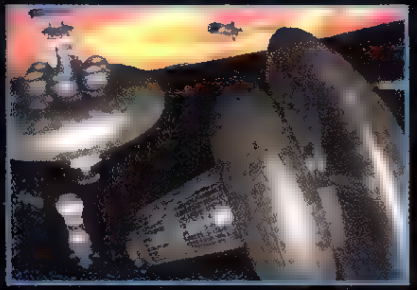

Develop agriculture, mining and manufacturing to survive, and then invest in research and recreation facilities to make life more comfortable for your colonists – hopefully they'll be around long enough to enjoy it. Because, in the end, the decisions you make will determine the destiny of mankind.

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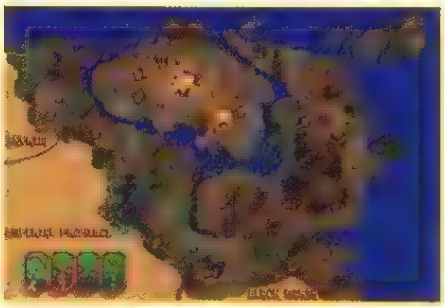
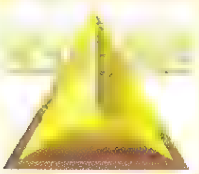
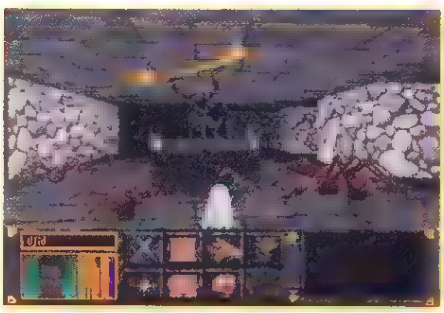


Just one of Tamriel's eight provinces. Explore the 400 towns and cities at will.



Slowly you regain consciousness, aware only of dampness and the sound of chains. Memory returns, as does sensation, both bringing pain. You are in the dungeons of the Emperor, left to die in a cell of cold stone and steel. With a burst of eldritch flame, however, your salvation appears: your old friend, Ria Silmane. She tells a tale of betrayal and injustice: the rightful Emperor is gone, whisked into a prison dimension by the traitor Jagar Tharn, who has assumed his place. Tharn's mistake was in underestimating the threat you present. She frees you to wander the land, training yourself as you search for the scattered pieces of the Staff of Chaos.



Enter a world of danger and darkness where your skills as an adventurer are needed.

And so begins your overall quest in the world of The Elder Scrolls: Arena. First, of course, you'll design your character. Either select your class from the eighteen provided, or generate the class you are most suited for by answering a series of questions. You might end up as a stealthy Rogue, or a graceful Acrobat. Wield the ways of magic as an enigmatic Sorcerer, Battle Mage or Nightblade. Select also one of eight races, each with decidedly different abilities.

As play begins, you find yourself in a first-person full screen 360° rotational movement engine. Combat, movement and treasure hunting will all occur seamlessly from this view.

There will be plenty of all three. Tamriel consists of nine provinces, containing a grand total of 400 cities, villages and towns—plus untold dozens of dungeons. In all, there are over 12 million square kilometers of game to explore.

Spellcasters will find themselves returning to town often to visit the

Keep tabs on your advancement, watching statistics and abilities change.

The Elder Scrolls: Arena

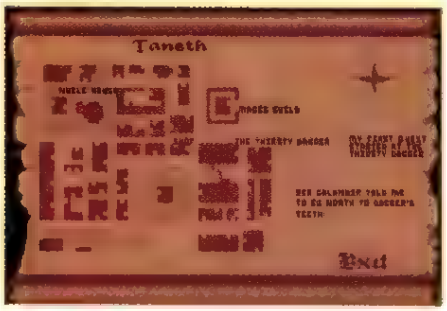
by Bethesda Softworks

Game Summary

Enter a huge world of first-person fully rotational 3-D role-playing. Complete a series of quests in order to rebuild the scattered Staff of Chaos and dispel a big bad evil guy.

Overall Rating: 94%

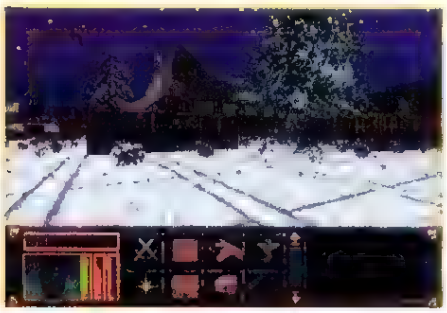
Requirements:	386/25, 4 Meg RAM VGA, Hard Drive, Mouse
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, Ensoniq, Roland, Ultrasound, Aria
Controller:	Mouse, Keyboard
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Bethesda Softworks
Distributed by:	Bethesda Softworks
Retail Price:	$69.95
Hard Drive Space:	25 Meg
No. of Players:	One player



Automapping shows you the way. Make notes right on the scrolling map.

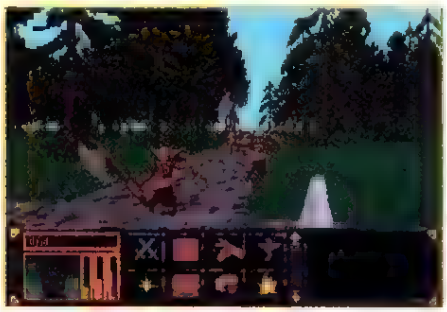
Mage's Guild. There, not only can one of Arena's 2500 magic items be identified, but spells may be purchased or created. Players can combine up to three effects from a list of 38 to create unique spells of varying power; for example, combining Create Shield with Enhance Strength with user-defined ranges on the efficacy of both—say a 20 Hit Point Shield and 10 Strength added for 10 rounds.

Prepare to play TES: Arena for a while. You must gather enough experience and magic to successfully challenge Jagar Tharn, and that will take some doing. However, don't fret. Your



Snow falls over a village in the north. Wander inside the town looking for information.

quest has no time limits, since the Emperor has been imprisoned in a nearly timeless dimension. You're free to explore as much of Tamriel as you'd like. If you decide you'd rather spend the next year of game time walking across Elseweyr seeking treasure, the plot will wait until you come back. TES: Arena is an open-ended game, allowing for hours of play in any capacity.



You don't stay indoors; why should Arena? There are over 12 million square kilometers.

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
91	89	85	88	99

Every few years, a landmark game will come along that revolutionizes an entire genre, and causes gamers and designers alike to reevaluate the possibilities. For CRPGs, TES: Arena is that game. No other game has captured the feel and essence of role-playing like this one does. No other game has the depth and size (400 towns! Literally dozens upon dozens of dungeons!) that Arena has. No other game feels like the designers loved pen-and-paper RPGs and wanted to flesh them out on paper. There is no reason for play to ever stop in Arena. The plot is not necessary to play, and will never hamper you. You can wander across the countryside and find dungeons, inns and temples that are not germane to the plot. Areas and rooms look like they were designed to be used by people: intelligent layouts, furniture, the works. With eighteen character classes, most very different from one another, plus eight races, every character will feel and play differently—differently enough to warrant using up every save slot by yourself. My normal critical stance has given way to abject worship of this game. While it does have its problems (learning curve for the interface will be a bit steep), these are easily swept under the carpet when you are pulled in by this game. The best news is yet to come: it's a series, and work is underway on its sequels. You must play this game: it has no equals. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
92	94	81	87	94

If I was told that my life depended on saying three bad things about Arena, I'd be dead. The only thing that I thought was not above average on this game were the graphics. They are somewhat grainy. This did not detract much from my overall enjoyment of the game, however, and it shouldn't for you, either. Music and sound are okay, but it's the physical structure of the game and the innovative interface that kept me playing long past my bedtime. Travel in the game was most amazing. If you so desire, you can physically walk from town to town; if you want to travel between towns quickly, there is an overhead map that you can simply point and click on to reach your next destination. Since your character doesn't have to eat, there is no need to weigh yourself down for a long journey; many thanks to the designers for leaving this out of the game. The random character generation engine is nice, too; you can talk to anyone that isn't attacking you, and they will respond differently if you are brandishing a weapon (just for fun, go to the palace in whatever town you're in and walk in with your sword drawn). Battle is handled by swinging your mouse back and forth across the image of the character you're fighting, and your ability determines how well and how often you will strike, based on what type of character you're fighting Special note to Vijay: thanks for a brilliant game. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
78	81	82	91	89

Okay, I'm impressed. The first chapter of the Elder Scrolls shows a lot of promise, both in its design and how well it carries itself. I like RPG's that allow you to select your character's talents based on real-life decisions, and Arena has that. I also like RPG's that offer complete worlds to explore, and Arena does. The impressive thing about this game is that if you feel like it, you can ignore the plot and just role-play. There's no real pressure to do anything you don't want to do other than survive. If the story doesn't interest you, forget about it and go exploring, finding quests and dungeons on your own. There are a number of different races and character classes to choose from, which is also a boon. A major downside of this product is the control scheme. The keyboard is infinitely better than mouse control, but I still had problems picking up items and fighting. While this interface does work, the learning curve is steep. Prepare for some busted games or a lot of restarts before you figure it out. The music is good and creates a nice atmosphere. I'm not 100% sold on the graphics (a little too pixely for me) or the first-person perspective. I think the designers succumbed to VR-wannabe pressure. Arena would've worked just as well or better, in my opinion, as a top down or 3/4 view game, which would also allow you to add more characters to your party. ***-Steve***

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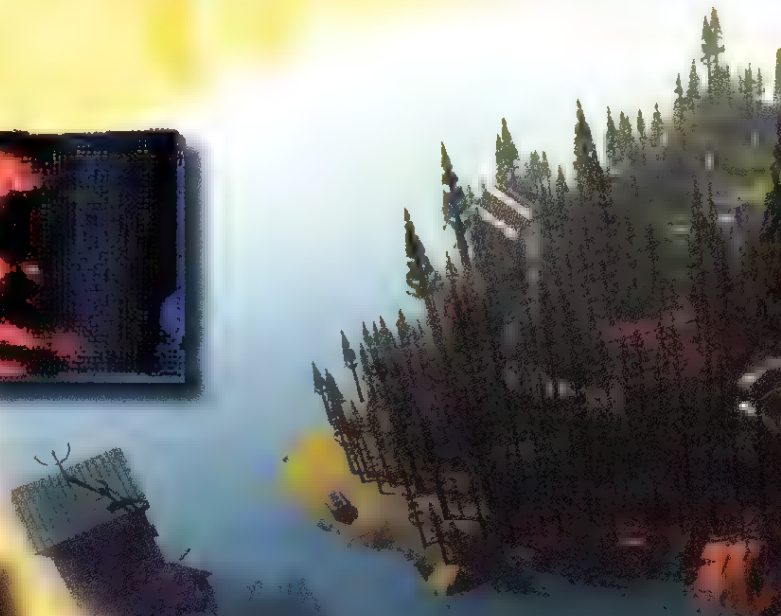

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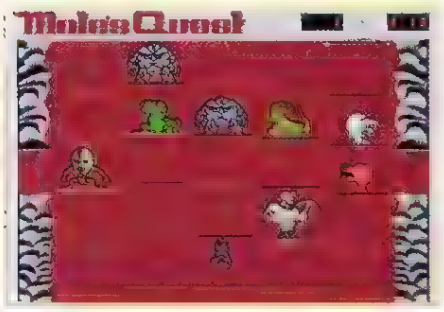
The first in a series of games from Mallard, Fast Action Paq!: The First Challenge brings you four arcade games for Windows. These games promise hours of challenging fun and stress relief, perfect for those times when you just need to blow something up. If only this game came out before those terrorists bombed the World Trade Center...

Bubble Trouble's scenario is that of interstellar trade routes blocked by subspace vortices. Your job is to clear them away before they destroy your ship. Rogue aliens are ever prowling, so keep some of your power on hand. And if you see a power-up, grab it. it could save your life

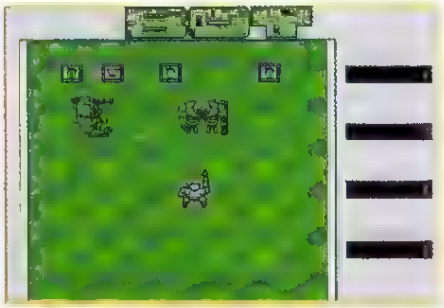
In Flak Attack, you are in charge of a peacekeeping base that is under constant attack from without. Helicopters loaded with robotic shock troops (under the influence of a computer virus) fly overhead; those shock troops will be raining down on your head in the blink of an eye. In between salvoes from these attack craft, attempt to shoot down robot-controlled jets and satellites. But be careful of the friendly helicopters that will attempt to deliver ammo to your base.



In Mole's Quest, you must safely gather your belongings from a horror-filled cavern.

All's quiet in your mole hole in Mole's Quest when a major corporation comes in mining for a place to filter uranium. Now you have to gather all your belongings and find a new home. Sound easy? Vicious miners and mutant subterranean creatures will change your mind. Follow a series of mazes and mine shafts that will lead you to safety... or death.

In 'Bot, you're the head of a robot manufacturing plant whose central computer has suddenly gone berserk and started producing killer robots. Your job: kill 'em all. You'll be equipped with the latest technology in armor and weapons, so have at 'em.



Find the berserk central computer in 'Bot while battling weapons of mass destruction.

Fight off enemy ships while freeing the space lanes of sub-space rifts.

Fast Action Paq!
by Mallard Software

Game Summary
Four arcade games for Windows designed to challenge your eye-hand coordination, as well as your intellect and reflexes. High-res graphics and sound.

Overall Rating: 67%

Requirements:	386-33, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.0
Sound Support:	Any Windows-compatible sound card
Controller:	Keyboard
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	The Dreamers Guild
Distributed by:	Mallard Software
Retail Price:	$34.95
Hard Drive Space:	3.5 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
85	81	70	75	65

Windows is a decent platform for some types of games. Action games generally don't fall within this domain. FAPAQ! looks, plays and feels like a bunch of shareware games with a new coat of paint slapped on them. The only game of the four I'll voluntarily play is Flak Attack, and that only because it reminds me of a (much, much better) shareware game I've played. Bubble Trouble is an Asteroids retread. Mole Quest is interesting for perhaps five minutes. And 'Bot is hardly worth the trouble we had in getting it to run properly. If you're looking for Windows games to play at work, and need them to be unaddictive, FAPAQ! is certainly consummate to your needs. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
92	75	90	86	92

While all of these games (with the exception of 'Bot) are rehashings of old arcade and freeware games, I can't say I'm truly stunned by any of them. The graphics are excellent, but you pay the price with speed. 'Bot takes the heaviest toll in CPU speed and caused one of our systems to issue a general protection fault for video in 256 color mode and another to issue bad ANSI codes to the keyboard. Flak Attack is reminiscent of a game I played in the early '80s called Paratrooper; Mole's Quest is essentially a new take on Frogger (and the game I'd be most likely to play again), and Bubble Trouble is a rehashing of Asteroids. Buy it if it sounds interesting. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
89	83	87	79	76

With the plethora of Windows entertainment packages out there, it seems like only a matter of time before everyone has one. The Mallard entrant into the Windows fray is not one of the better ones that I've seen. Sure, the graphics are decent and on several of the titles the game play is pretty good as well. The main problem from my standpoint is that three of the games (Mole's Quest, Bubble Trouble and Flak Attack) are uninspired rehashes of arcade classics (Frogger, Asteroids and Missile Command, respectively). 'Bot is uninspired on its own accord. It isn't bad, but there's a whole lot better out there. If you need every Windows game available, go for it. ***-Steve***

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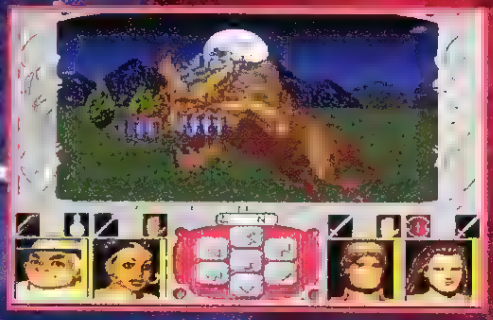

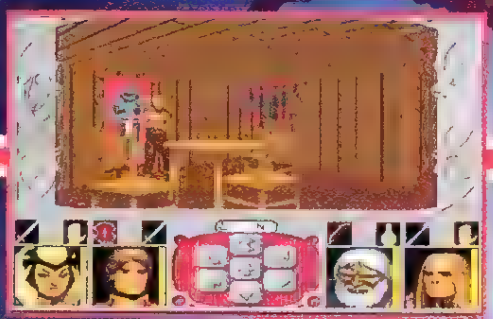

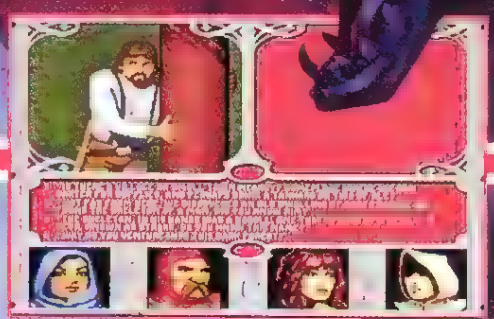

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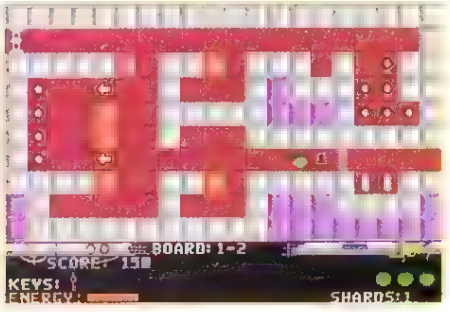
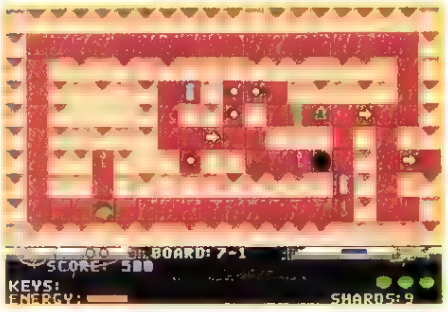
Arcade reflexes are not required. What is required is the ability to gauge possible benefits against redeemable resources and figure out the most profitable and least costly path. Make a single misstep along the way and you could run out of energy before you clear the level; this restarts you at the beginning of the level (a somewhat frustrating development, but hey, this is a logic puzzle. It's only fair, no matter how mad you might get).



Getting off a board sometimes comes down to one energy point.



Is there enough energy to get the red key? Weigh these decisions carefully...

Each level consists of a variable number of boards, and there are seven levels. This doesn't mean that you must start over at the first level each time, as the designer has kindly installed a password system for getting to the level you played last

Success in the game often comes down to one move. The final level will test your judgment ability (and your patience); a single mistake means a quick and decisive failure.

There is a constant musical score throughout the game; it changes from level to level. Sound effects range from simple "bings" to human screams.

If the game does well, Dan Sejzer (president of Villa Crespo) hinted that he might be willing to add more levels. Another rumor was a possible level editor that would allow you to design levels to confound your friends and baffle your enemies. If you love tricky puzzles (and who doesn't?), you're bound to love ELEMENTS.

Do you need this energy cell now? Or can you wait? A wrong move can spell the end.

Elements
by Villa Crespo Software

Game Summary
A logic game requiring planning. You must navigate mazes, keeping an eye on your energy level, collecting extra energy and keys to unlock gates.

Overall Rating: 87%

Requirements:	286, 640K RAM, VGA
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib Roland
Controller:	Keyboard
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Avery Pack/Villa Crespo
Distributed by:	Villa Crespo Software
Retail Price:	$29.95
Hard Drive Space:	1.2 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
87	63	70	83	59

While I appreciate the innovation present in this product on an artistic level, I must confess to not really liking the game itself all that much. Puzzle/logic games have never been my forte, and this is no exception. Elements requires painstaking attention to every single move (no hyperbole). There is only one correct way to successfully complete many levels. While this interests me for a while, it can't hold my attention for long. I don't feel like beating my noggin against a particularly frustrating wall time and time again just for the neural satisfaction of it all. Puzzle fans and other mental masochists will likely love this game; I prefer less linear thought. (Score: 86) ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
90	93	87	87	73

As I've said elsewhere in these hallowed pages, I love logic puzzles. ELEMENTS is devious, evil, and devilish; in other words, it's fun. The graphics are good and the sound is excellent. If you play a lot of shareware, you've probably come across Avery Pack's name already; although young, he's already designed a number of other logic games of this ilk. I'm particularly excited about the possibility of a level editor; as a hardcore puzzler, I was disappointed that there weren't enough levels to keep me going (five hours a day) for more than a week. I have to give extra points for this game's price; you often don't see quality like this for a price this low. (Score: 88) ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
87	84	71	86	89

What we saw at Winter CES does not disappoint. Elements, while having little to enthrall the player visually, provides excellent game play and some devilish puzzles. No arcade skill is required to make it through. Instead, the game relies on making the player think, rethink and think some more. One mis-step can throw an entire puzzle out the window, forcing you to restart and find where you made your error. It would be handy to have a function that undoes your last move, but the lack of the feature adds to the challenge of the game. Sounds are good, which is nice, since you may find yourself staring at the screen plotting your next move for hours. (Score: 87) ***-Steve***

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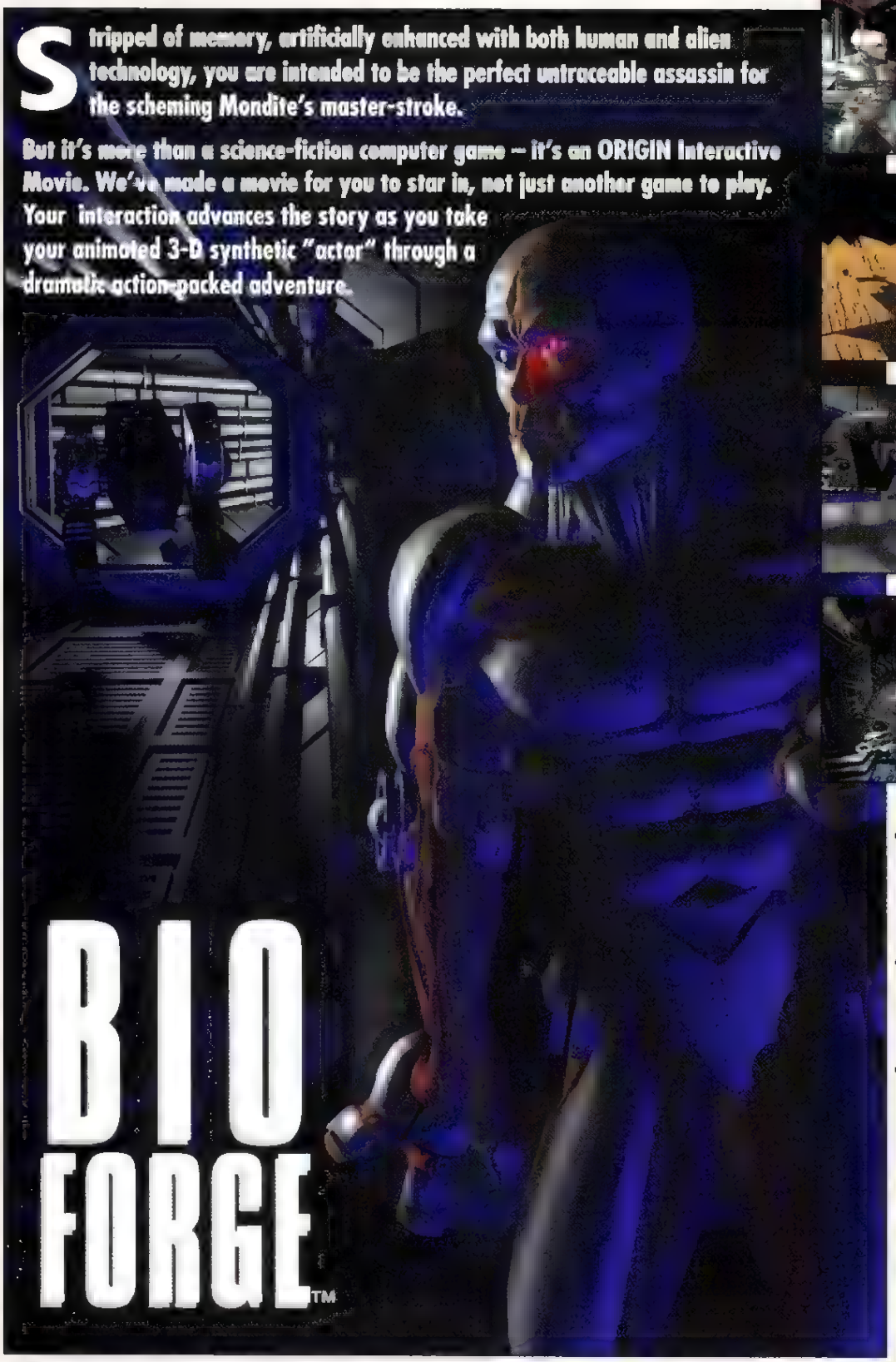

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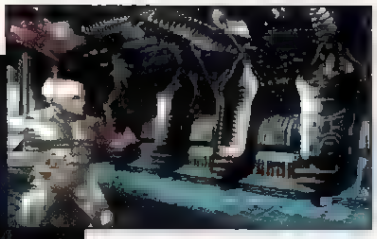

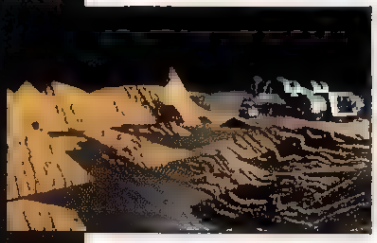

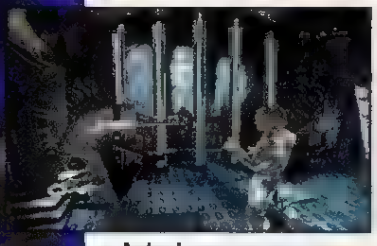

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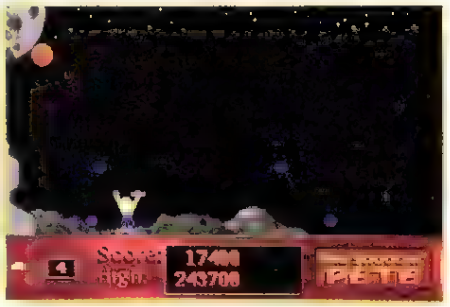
Pea-Shootin' Pete is a former shareware game that has been upgraded with graphics and sound. The idea behind the game is simple: shoot everything that moves (or, in this case, bounces) while trying to keep your player alive.

The storyline goes something like this: insane robots and expansionist aliens from outer space have descended upon Pete's town in the dead of night. Pete was camping out, saw the aliens, and knew that it was up to him (armed with his trusty peashooter) to defend the town. You must help him earn the bonuses and power-ups that will help keep him alive, while avoiding the deadly kamikaze robots and bombs.

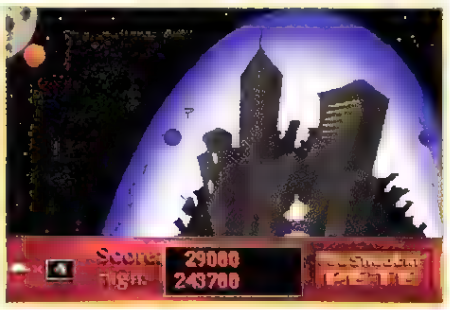
Avoid getting gruesomely killed as you attempt to thwart the evil aliens.



Exult in your victory after collecting a level increaser power-up.

Pea Shootin' Pete is easy to learn, but you'll find yourself coming back again and again to its addictive challenge. The interface uses just the arrow keys and spacebar, but the controls are configurable if you so desire. Digitized sound effects and music, as well as VGA graphics, help to make this little shooter colorful and fun.

Levels become increasingly difficult as more and more targets are added to the scenario. Some targets are translucent and thus blend in with the background. In order to combat these more effectively, use the jump button to collect bonuses and power-ups in mid-air. When accumulated in this manner, they become either double their value or doubly effective, depending on what type of power-up you are collecting. So strap yourself to your chair, because you won't want to quit playing.



Some kamikaze robots are set for "seek-and-destroy" missions.

Pea Shootin' Pete

by Villa Crespo

Game Summary

Addictive classic arcade fun. Collect bonuses and power-ups while shooting your way through intermediate levels between boss monsters. Reflexes are a must.

Overall Rating: 87%

Requirements:	286, 640K RAM, VGA or better
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib, Roland
Controller:	Keyboard
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Raoul Said
Distributed by:	Villa Crespo Software
Retail Price:	$19.95
Hard Drive Space:	1 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
80	93	65	68	83

More arcade games should be like this: short on investment, long on fun. PSP is the kind of game that makes you wonder why you play it over and over and over again. Graphics are simple; sound is adequate. Actual play is maddeningly simple and addictive. It has the singularity of purpose (expandable to a hundred different situations) that mark all the great arcade games. This is not a game designed to show off your new 486; rather, it's a game designed to showcase the elegance of a non-violent shoot-'em-up arcade game. Children, spouses or roommates who are turned away by your other huge complex games will like PSP–obviously this is a plus and a minus. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
91	94	87	88	94

I was prepared to be underwhelmed by Pea Shootin' Pete and came away sort of gibbering. This arcade-style shooter is so much fun, you'll find yourself sitting up until the wee hours with it. The animations are typical of the arcade ilk which spawned this game, but the backgrounds are very nice, indeed. Digitized sound effects are candy, and the musical score is quite good (though I'm sure some people will find it annoying after awhile). Villa Crespo has done the game-buying public a great service by offering such an entertaining product at such a low price (when was the last time you bought a game for twenty bucks? Circa 1982, I'll bet...). Prepare yourself for fun. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
86	90	73	81	93

Pea Shootin' Pete is not the end-all of arcade games, but for what Villa Crespo is charging, it's pretty good. Essentially, it's a redo of Buster Bros. from the TurboGrafx era, but it's a decent rehash. The power-ups are useful and I like that jumping to catch a power-up either increases its value or gives you points. Levels get devious pretty quickly, which makes for a continual challenge. Don't expect to be floored by amazing action or incredible visual fests. PSP is a simple arcade banger that gives what it promises: a good challenge with well-tuned game play. Decent music is a bonus as well. For the price, it would be difficult to find another game this addictive. ***-Steve***

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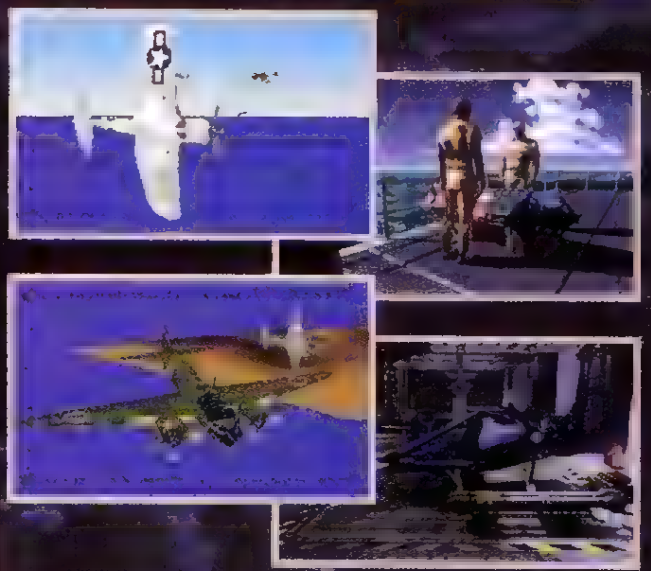

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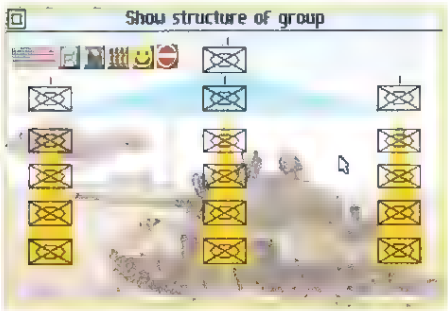
CAMPAIGN 2 BRINGS YOU THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BATTLES OF THE PAST FIFTY YEARS IN A NEW STYLE OF WAR SIM.

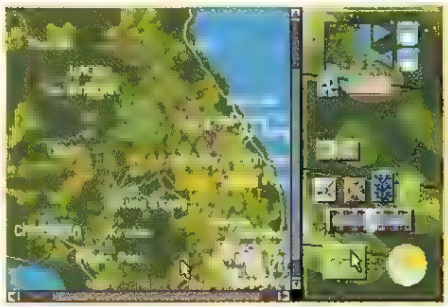
Empire has brought a combination strategy and action game to the PC with Campaign 2. Not only can you simply play from a war sim standpoint, you can also get down to the individual tank or helicopter unit to experience direct fighting action. The game also features all of the modern weapons of war, including guided missiles, laser rangefinders, and night sights (note that you will only be able to access the actual weapons available for any particular historical simulations).

Empire hired expert military consultant William Owen, who has brought his extensive knowledge to bear on the design of the game. The end result is a simulation that looks and feels more realistic than ever before. All aspects of running an armed conflict have been considered so that now you can place yourself in command of either side, at any level in the chain of command. Over 130 templates of the most significant military forces from fifty-six nations have been included to gain an insight into real conflicts such as Vietnam, Korea, and Operation Desert Storm. You can enter the battlefield (based on your army) in any of 152 fighting vehicles. Tanks, armored personnel carriers, and even helicopters (including the venerable Huey, Cobra and SeaCobra) can all be individually controlled and come armed with weapons relevant to the craft and conflict. From the Abrams to the T72, now you can kill or be killed in the most effective weapons of full bodily dismemberment while raining death and destruction on the enemy forces. Animated infantry can be deployed from any armored personnel carriers on the battlefield. Reference maps are included with the game, as well as a manual detailing all of the mobile weaponry available to your beck and call.

Take direct command of an M248. Looks like you've got an enemy tank in your sights.



Each of your groups has a hierarchical structure that can be accessed and viewed.



Try your hand at various historical scenarios including Korea and Vietnam.

Campaign II
by Empire Software

Game Summary

Out-maneuver and out-gun your opponent as you drive him to the sea where you will ultimately decimate his already barren and skeletal forces.

Overall Rating: 61%

Requirements:	286, 2MB RAM, DOS 3.3, MCGA/VGA
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, Roland MT-32/LAPC-1
Controller:	Mouse, keyboard
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Empire Software
Distributed by:	Empire Software
Retail Price:	$59.95
Hard Drive Space:	3 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
65	71	80	75	78

This is one of the more ambitious pieces of software to cross our PCs this month; as a result, its failures are more ambitious than most. C2 is laudable in its attempt to capture military operations with proper military structure intact (i.e. battalion, company, etc.). It is especially ambitious with its attempt to give the player control of all units, even individually, in a 3-D environment. However, this 3-D environment pales quickly, and C2 fails in other areas. Its "historical" battles are truncated versions of the real thing. All the action is vehicular in nature, not the combined-arms feeling of real warfare. The builder will keep you from discarding C2 on the spot; but you will later. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
79	45	77	77	79

Friends tell me I'm usually funniest when I'm angry; this review ought to be hilarious. Campaign 2 can be summed up in one word: uncontrollable. It's very nice that you can command individual units on the battlefield, and it's probably good advice to listen to your tank's driver and gunner. However, if I'm going to be put in a position of command, I don't expect to have to court martial the entire army for disobeying my orders. Every time I attempted to get into an altercation with an enemy, my driver would turn the tank as if to run from the situation. Nothing I did would get the tank to align itself properly. I can't think of a more frustrating way to play a game. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
65	50	74	81	72

Can you say control difficulties? Try saying Campaign II. While this game is a relative improvement over its predecessor, I knock points off for a still unwieldy method of control. It would be nice to recommend allowing the computer to run your battles, but that's not workable, since I suffered incredible losses even with a sizable advantage in tanks when I let the computer do the work. The number of scenarios is very nice, as is the ability to build your own maps. Regardless, the games problems are not only dominant, they're obvious. The blocky graphics, difficulty in targeting opponents and overall clunky game play make this one to get only after it hits the bargain shelf. ***-Steve***

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MURDERS IN THE HEART OF MODERN NEW ORLEANS...

SIERRA'S GABRIEL KNIGHT: SINS OF THE FATHERS WILL LEAVE YOU HEART COLD AND YOUR HANDS CLAMMY.

The French Quarter is abuzz about the serial killings plaguing their town, the so-called "Voodoo Murders". Voodoo implements and symbols are always found around the victim, but the police are certain that the evidence is meant to lead them away from the real killer.

You are Gabriel Knight, a young man whose bookstore specializes in rare books. Your dream is to one day turn out a blockbuster mystery novel, but writer's block is hampering the conclusion of your latest (and, to date, only) book. Not to mention those strange nightmares that have ended only when you awaken to the sound of your own screams.

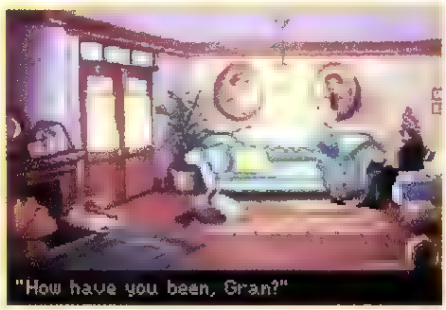
St. Louis Cathedral. The original church on this site was built in 1724 and was named for Louis IX of France. That church burnt in the great fire of 1788. The present church dates from 1851.

The game is filled with interesting and accurate information about New Orleans.

Although Gabriel doesn't know it, he is the last in a lineage of Schattenjägern, or Shadow Hunters. He is fated to fight the dark forces of the supernatural, tormented by a centuries-old curse. He must spend every waking moment scouring the side streets and alleys of New Orleans for the key to his past. And when he sleeps, the nightmare begins.

For this adventure game, Sierra has updated its venerable gaming engine; commands are now somewhat easier to access with the more intuitive interface. The game is dark and–forgive me for using the word, but nothing else fits–gothic. The backgrounds are dark and gritty, much like New Orleans (more specifically, the warehouse district of the French Quarter) at night. They are beautifully rendered, and not much in the way of the so-called "hot" colors are used; deep blues and greens dominate.

Conversation now takes place away from the game; each person you can talk to appears in a separate segue away from the action of the game. Conversation is menu- and event-driven; you can only talk in generalities until a specific topic has been broached by the NPC you're talking to. Once you've



Is your Granny a woman with a dark secret or just an innocent bystander?

Gabriel Knight
by Sierra

Game Summary

A graphical adventure game, you must unearth the clues and put together the evidence to solve the serial murders that have recently plagued New Orleans.

Overall Rating: 91%

Requirements:	386, 4MB RAM, VGA
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib, Roland, PAS
Controller:	Mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Sierra
Distributed by:	Sierra
Retail Price:	$69.95
Hard Drive Space:	16.9 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Conversation takes place away from the action of the game.

uncovered a new topic, it gets added to your conversation menu, and you can ask almost anyone about the new topic.

Movement from one distinct location to another is done through the use of an icon map. For instance, to get from Jackson Park to St. Louis Cathedral, you exit the park, a map comes up, and you click on the St. Louis Cathedral icon. This is a departure for Sierra; anyone who's ever played any of their games and is expecting more of the same will be surprised. Even though New Orleans is beautiful, what game designer would want to hand-render it?

Most of the concrete locations have a dark, urban gothic feel.

A warning for parents: this game is meant to be for adults only. There are scenes of graphic violence, and the language has less in common with King's Quest 6 than it does with Stephen King. If you are going to let your child (or children) play or watch you play this game, you do so at your own risk. When he or she starts having nightmares, you'll have no one to blame but yourself.

An icon-driven movement map helps you get from place to place.

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
84	86	89	95	42

Wow. Sierra has produced a point-and-click adventure game that I actually like. GK has the lush feel of a real story, combined with the textured detail of a graphic engine and truly dazzling music. The background music in Gabriel's bookstore in the very beginning introduces a theme that will be found many times again, a hauntingly simple tune that will stay in your head for days. While GK features (I should say suffers from) the trademark Sierra interface, it manages to invoke the interface so smoothly and easily that I am forced to admit that point-and-click can work on occasion. Atmosphere is paramount in GK; the designers chose an odd variation on horror that I am very pleased with. Instead of attempting standard horror, which rarely works on a computer, GK uses an intellectual approach, whereby the title character begins in a slightly creepy but perfectly normal world. Slowly, through increasing encounters and terrifying dreams, he finds his world dissolving into a chaotic and violent world just under the surface of New Orleans. It's an approach that works well in novels and films, and works well in GK. I urge you to purchase the CD version if your computer is so equipped, since the voice talent Sierra recruited for this game is excellent and adds to the atmosphere immeasurably. GK breathes new life into the hackneyed graphic adventure. See it. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
89	89	87	87	71

Sierra hasn't turned out a game in about three years that I've actually enjoyed playing, and I didn't think the streak would end with Gabriel Knight. But, as you can see from my score, the streak has ended and Sierra is back in my playground. This game is disturbing, nightmarish, and just generally creepy; the designers managed to get me deeply involved in the storyline, to my surprise. The only reasons the game didn't score higher were based on economics: the game is expensive and requires a high-end machine to run with any kind of speed (it seemed a bit punchy in places on our 486-66). Getting to the meat of the action, let me expound on the virtues of the game. Although the animations are a little chunky, the backgrounds are delightfully rendered; the designers apparently went to a lot of trouble to add at least one subconsciously disturbing image to each (e.g., the pictures in Granny's living room). Even though I'd like someday for someone to come up with a sound schema that codecs on the fly, it ain't happened yet. Voices would be nice (the CD version has them), but text will suit for now. The music is haunting; it really enhanced my enjoyment of the game. The interface is nicely placed away from the main game area, so you don't run into it with the mouse too much. I still don't like point-and-search, but this game was compelling enough to make me forget I was having to do it. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
84	88	90	89	45

What can you tell me about. . .action/adventures? It looks like the programmers responsible for Gabriel Knight can tell a lot of people everything they'd want to know. GK is a tremendous game, filled with atmosphere, horrific elements, occasional wit and a lot of charm. My experiences in New Orleans are admittedly limited, but it seems that GK has captured much of the essence of that city. The interface has been somewhat updated from previous Sierra titles, making it simple to play and easy to get into. The quest itself is decidedly interesting, revolving around the unique horrors of voodoo magic and ritual murder. The actual game itself is a dream to play. Control is simple, and moving from place to place occurs on a map screen, so you no longer have to memorize the path from one area to the next. It's nearly impossible to get lost. The characters have their own personalities, which brings a whole new element to the game. If you have a CD-ROM, do yourself a favor and pick up the CD version of this game. The voices really add to the experience. If you are CD-less, don't let that dissuade you from playing Gabriel Knight. The experience is unforgettable, and you may find yourself having nightmares similar to those of Mr. Knight. Play it, enjoy it and finish it. Then, take out a pen and paper and demand a sequel from Sierra. We need more games like this! ***-Steve***

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Centuries before you were born, he plotted your doom.

Coktel Vision's Lost in Time is innovative enough to hold your attention if not your belief.

You've witnessed a thief from the future commit a crime in your present. Now you must race across time to outwit the murderous fiend, thwarting his effort to kill the family of your past. You'll explore hostile jungles, luxurious chateaus, and a past fraught with danger. In your race against and through time, you'll battle evil, not with muscle, but with intuition, imagination, and ingenuity.

From the creators of the award-winning Inca, this new "Interactive Action Adventure Movie" offers suspense, romance, and inquiry into the meaning and nature of time. To save your own life, you must escape from an ancient galleon, seize evidence from a macabre mansion, then claw through dark caves and dense tropical forests on a Caribbean island. Face your enemy in the past before he erases your future.

The beginning of your journey through time brings you aboard a slave ship.

An relaxing evening by the fire is simply not meant to be your destiny.

The game features over 30 scenes set in France and the Caribbean, including hand-painted, digitized backgrounds from the French comic strip artist Segur. Through the magic of software, you become the captivating heroine in a tale of suspense, romance and intrigue.

Travel in the game is nearly effortless. Through the use of a slim and refined icon interface, you can instantly pull up an overhead view of the immediate vicinity, completely digitized and showing place names. Movement from there is a simple point-and-click away.

A handy hint feature is built into the game for the tougher puzzles. The software allows you three hints for one system. If you need more hints after that, you'll have to reinstall the software or call Sierra. An interesting feature is that the hint icon will not work in some places, depending on whether or not the designers considered the puzzle that has you perplexed difficult or not.

The IRS would like to discuss back taxes on that chateau you inherited...

Lost in Time
by Coktel Vision

Game Summary

Adventure game developed on video platform. You catch a thief from the future and now he has gone back to your past to kill your ancestors so that you cannot catch him.

Overall Rating: 80%

Requirements:	286-16, 640K RAM, VGA
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster, AdLib, Roland, PAS
Controller:	Mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Coktel Vision
Distributed by:	Sierra On-Line
Retail Price:	$39.95
Hard Drive Space:	17.8 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
91	78	82	81	42

Coktel has managed to produce an ambitious graphic adventure that dares to step beyond the standard plotlines. The storyline is twisted indeed, and players will have to contend with a game in which normal views of *a priori* and *a posteriori* thought do not necessarily apply. You'll start with objects in your inventory that you won't pick up till later in a flashback. Unfortunately, this premise doesn't always work well; and some of the dialogue and jokes are badly translated or simply don't make sense in English. But if you're looking for a reasonably engaging adventure game with some tough puzzles, LiT is a game to look at, an oddity in its genre. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
85	84	84	91	30

Although this game will never replace X-Wing as one of my all-time favorites, it has its good points. Graphics are decent (the animations are the closest to video I've seen so far, though still chunky); music and sound are both very good. One thing I think the game is lacking is the ability to grab the player's attention. Suspension of disbelief is simply never summoned from the depths. I think this is in large part due to the pseudo-video quality of real actors against hand-rendered backgrounds: it looks somewhat fake and forced. Another failing is the "one-use" motive of most objects in the game; it doesn't allow any leeway for possible ingenious solutions to puzzles. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
76	80	79	83	38

FMV doesn't always work on a disk-based game, but Lost in Time pulls it off reasonably well. I do, however, prefer the artwork to the digitized footage, and I have a bit of a problem adjusting back and forth. It's a very linear adventure; most of the objects can be used only once, and once used, vanish forever from your inventory. The story, while interesting in a way, is a bit hard to swallow. Time travel tales have always grated me the wrong way because of their implausibility, and LiT pulls off references in slap-dash fashion. I do like the *in medias res* beginning, since it's relatively new to computer gaming. This won't make any new converts, but it's not that bad. ***-Steve***

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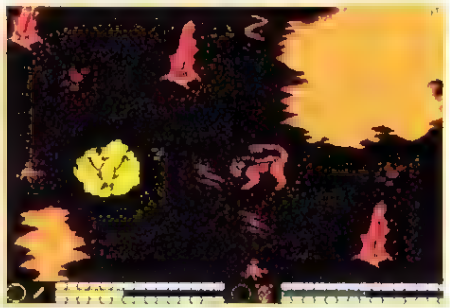
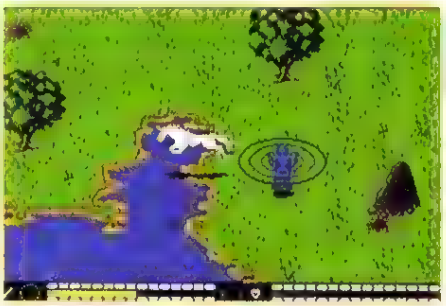
Archon returns like a shiny new penny—updated, reformed and still action-packed.

The Light Side nears defeat. Already the forces of Darkness have occupied the three medial Power Points as well as their home Point. Things look grim. The mighty Genie was lost to the Dragon; the shining Phoenix is all but dead after an altercation with a Water Elemental. The Wizard protects the last hope of Light: the final Power Point. Already, he has repelled two Basilisks and a Manticore. But now he feels the weight of the battle press in as the mysterious Shapeshifter flies in to confront him. . .

Archon was one of the best-selling action/strategy games ever when it appeared in the early days of home computing. The completely new version of Archon Ultra stays true to the simple formula of the old classic while upgrading the graphics and game play to the standards of the Nineties.



The Phoenix flares to avoid damage from the Manticore's flung Tail Spikes.

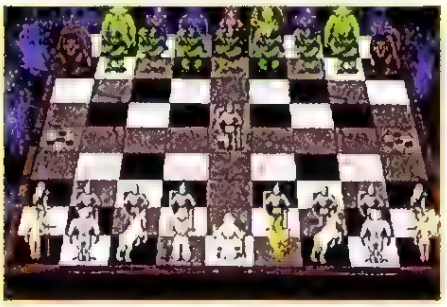


A Unicorn gracefully leaps away from the deadly draining of a Banshee.

The basic premise remains the same: fantasy warfare on a battle plane consisting of five Power Points. Possession of all five Points or destruction of the other side is necessary for victory. Eighteen pieces per side march into conflict with each other. When a square is contested, the two pieces battle it out in a real-time arcade sequence, each using two unique abilities to vanquish the other. To the winner goes the square.

Of course, the war is not that simple. The board undergoes a constant color cycling, from Light to Dark and back again. Light characters are stronger and tougher on lighter squares, and vice versa–adding a timed element to the battle. In addition, both sides are captained by spellcasters whose talents can affect the war. Spells such as Summon Elemental and Revive can alter the balance of power in a single turn.

Modem options are also available, offering the opportunity to fight a live opponent on-line.



Light opens strongly as a Knight takes the all-important central Power Point.

Archon Ultra
by SSI

Game Summary

Destroy Chaos or conquer Law in this revision and enhancement of the early Eighties classic. It's war on a chessboard with arcade battles and devious tactics and timing.

Overall Rating: 86%

Requirements:	386, VGA Hard Drive, 2 Meg RAM
Sound Support:	Sound Blaster and compatibles
Controller:	Joystick, Keyboard, Mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Freefall Associates
Distributed by:	Electronic Arts
Retail Price:	$49.95
Hard Drive Space:	5 Meg
No. of Players:	1-2 players

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
83	85	85	81	89

Archon is one of my favorite games of all time, and this update has only strengthened it. Now all the creatures have two battle powers instead of one. But best of all, the AI has been toughened to the point where it gives a good fight, definitely unlike the original. If you never saw the original, take a look at this one–it's more than just a rehash of an old game. The graphics are crisp and bright, and the interface is quick to learn. A good handicapping system will allow you to play against old hands without losing too much face. If you're an old Archon trooper, you must see this game. It shows that good game design, regardless of technology available, is timeless. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
95	95	92	86	92

Yet another sequel to a game I never played, Archon Ultra is a mesmerizing strategy/action game that is playable for hours on end. Graphics are bright and crisp and game play is fairly quick despite the animations. The designers score big points with me for including not just strategy, but eye-hand coordination requirements as well. I can't say I loved the sound and music, but neither did I want to turn them off; they make this already enjoyable game just a bit more tension-filled. The interface is so easy to use, I didn't even bother reading the manual, and I only needed a few tips from Kevin the Archon-meister to keep my players alive and kicking. AU is well worth the money. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
87	81	84	82	90

As much as I really wanted to fall in love with Archon Ultra, I couldn't. True, it is a revamped version of the first Archon, adding powers to each piece, but otherwise retaining the true feel of the game. Now the phoenix and banshee pieces are useful! Amazing! One of my big problems with the game, though, is that many of the pieces have been altered from the original needlessly. The basilisk is now painfully slow and still very weak. Flying creatures are nearly impossible to hit. Some creatures' secondary powers are unavoidable, knocking your strength down with no recourse. It's still Archon and it's still fun, but it's a far cry from perfect. ***-Steve***

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JURASSIC PARK

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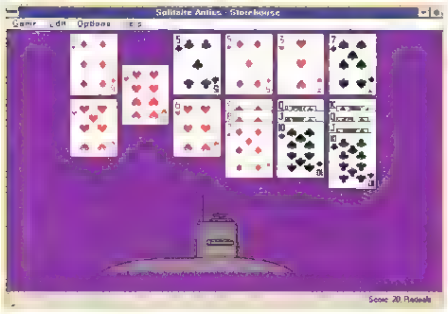
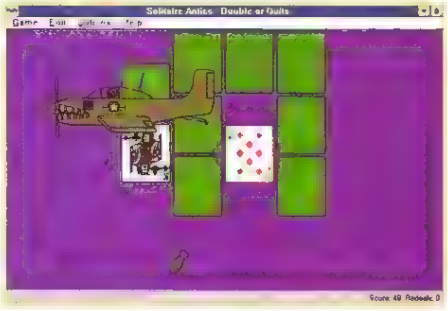
SOLITAIRE ANTICS FROM MASQUE CONQUERS THOSE RAINY-DAY-ALL-ALONE BLUES.

Solitaire Antics provides you with twenty-one of the best solitaire games ever invented, each with three levels of difficulty. Over fifty-five animations with sound supply you with many extra hours of entertainment value. The all-new Royal Family card game was created for this collection with your kids in mind.

Four decks of playing cards are included in the collection, as well as several background bitmaps; if you'd rather have a bitmap you designed, the program allows you to include it. The simple point-and-click interface means anyone with a mouse can enjoy this product, and there is an extensive help library outlining the rules of play for each game. If you'd rather listen to music during game play and you own a CD-ROM drive, Solitaire Antics allows you to control your CD from the game table.



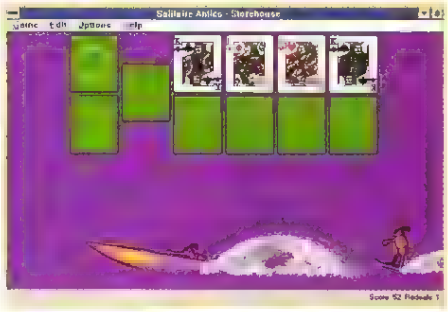
Storehouse is a fairly challenging and extremely addictive game.



Yes, this animation flies right over the cards, raining death and destruction.

Not surprisingly, the animations are run through a software engine known as Intermission. The reason this is not surprising is that Ant Software, the developers of Solitaire Antics, also developed Intermission (this is the engine used for the Opus 'n' Bill screen saver from Berke Breathed). Animated ants will randomly appear on the game board, or can be brought to life on demand (and turned off just as easily).

Some of the games included in this package are: Klondike, which most people associate with the game name Solitaire; Canfield, a difficult variation of four-stack Klondike; Auld Lang Syne, a game that usually can't be won without cheating (and no cheating is tolerated in the silicon version); Doubles or Quits, which can only be won by careful early planning; and Golf, which should be familiar to most early Windows 3.1 users (a shareware version was included in that package). So snuggle up and hunker down for some mental gymnastics!



The is the famous "water-skiing finish" to yet another successful round of play.

Solitaire Antics
by Masque Publishing

Game Summary
Twenty-one different games of solitaire, varying in difficulty from very easy to well-nigh impossible. Harder games should carry warning labels for heart attack candidates.

Overall Rating: 82%

Requirements:	Windows 3.0, VGA
Sound Support:	Any Windows-compatible sound software
Controller:	Mouse
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Ant Software
Distributed by:	GameTek
Retail Price:	$34.95
Hard Drive Space:	3.2 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
81	83	75	71	96

If you spend hours ensconced in front of your computer, trapped by the sizzling fury of Solitaire for Windows, forgetting to eat, sleep or breathe in the face of certain card-related doom, this game is all you need to step across the line into Nirvana. For the rest of us, it's still a pretty good package. There are more versions of solitaire here than anyone ever should play, and then some. Despite my above sarcasm, I actually got sucked into some of these variations–demanding that "just one more try" that has destroyed more sleep than any world crisis. One piece of advice: turn off the cloying animations. Beyond that, don't let the boss catch you. ***-Kevin***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
88	91	85	83	94

Take my advice: turn off the animations. They don't slow down game play in any perceptible way (oh, these modern times!), but they're as annoying as red traffic lights, though a lot cuter. Otherwise, I really enjoyed this collection. There are some very fine games and they are truly for every skill level, from child to Mensa lecturer. Graphics are standard Windows fare, and the animations are crisp, though extensively drawn-out, as for sound, stick to their CD player option if you have a drive. If you find that you enjoy solitary mental exercises and spending time with your computer, or if you want to teach your kids logical thinking, this collection may be for you. ***-Ted***

Interface	Playability	Graphics	Sound	Replay Value
88	82	86	82	92

As Solitaire packages go, so does this one. The animations are a nice option, although hardly needed or even desired after some time. I like a lot of the solitaire games included in the package as well. Control is easy, as it should be. Don't kid yourself; there are better card games out there (Solitaire's Journey comes to mind). However, if you are a Windows user, this more than likely beats the pants off whatever solitaire game you are currently playing. The instructions aren't always right. For example, it claims that the game Double or Quits is a tough one, while I have found that even reasonably intelligent play results in a win more than half the time. Not bad, not bad. ***-Steve***

THE LOCALS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU FOR LUNCH.

The good news is you survived the plane crash. The *bad* news is you're on the Isle of the Dead. Now, as you search for survival items and a way off the island, you face a horrifying assortment of flesh-eating zombies, hideous bats, blood-thirsty wolves and other unsavory locals. Can we help it if the press is calling it "gory," "gruesome," "graphic" and "sickening?"

You'll traverse dense jungles, treacherous caves and explore the local village to unlock riddles that could aid your escape. And if you're lucky, you may even rehabilitate a beautiful zombie babe.

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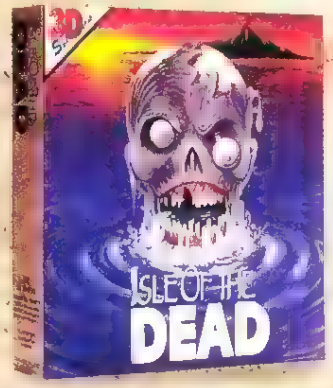
See your dealer or call today!

ISLE OF THE DEAD

WARNING: This game depicts scenes of graphic violence.



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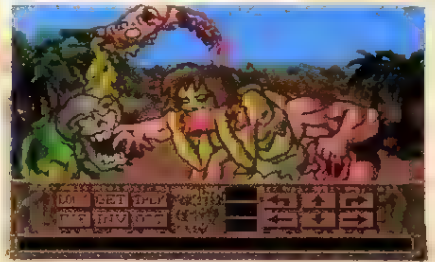
PC Entertainment, October, '93

"Definitely not for the faint-hearted. Sampled realistic sounds add to the sickening, bloody atmosphere."
VideoGames
September '93



"Brings new meaning to the term "graphic adventure."
PC Entertainment
October '93

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IBM 3.5" HD disks. Minimum requirements 386 PC or 100% compatible, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0 or greater, hard drive and VGA graphics. Sound support: Sound Blaster® and compatibles. ©1994 Merit Software.

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SOUND AND VISION FROM AZTECH LABS.

MULTIMEDIA UPGRADE KIT ALLOWS YOU TO PLAY ALL THE LATEST CD-ROM SOFTWARE.

The Sound Galaxy Pro 16 Multimedia Upgrade Kit is an all-in-one sound/CD solution for those who are looking for optimal audio performance from their system.

Aztech Labs is apparently shooting for the title of "the little company that could" with its latest product offering. Its Multimedia Upgrade Kit is a sound investment (no pun intended) for those gamers who want a one-shot vaccine for the ability to play all those CD-ROM titles that continually show up on retailer's shelves. The kit includes their Sound Galaxy Pro 16 Extra sound card, a double-speed Philips CD-ROM drive, a pair of speakers, a microphone and stand, and a CD software bundle comprised of Sierra's Jones in the Fast Lane and Space Quest 4, Interplay's Battle Chess (Enhanced), Macromedia's Action! for Windows and The Software Toolworks' Multimedia Encyclopedia. As would be expected, all necessary cabling is included (with the exception of an AC/DC adapter for the battery powered speakers), and Aztech Labs has been kind enough to include mounting screws for the internal CD drive. As with all their sound cards, Aztech supplies a nice complement of Windows software from Voyetra for use with the SGP16.

Three manuals come with the upgrade kit: one for the hardware of the sound card, one for the hardware of the CD-ROM drive and one detailing all of the standard Aztech Labs software. As usual, the SGP16 is Sound Blaster and AdLib compatible, and will support general MIDI (and, for the true sound connoisseur, consider their WavePower add-on for wave-table synthesis). Should you stumble along the way, Aztech offers technical support numbers in the US, Singapore, Germany and Malaysia, as well as BBS numbers for those countries.

Sound Galaxy Multimedia Upgrade Kit
by Aztech Labs

Hardware Summary
Including a double-speed CD-ROM and 16-bit stereo sound card, this package is rounded out by a pair of speakers, a microphone, and a software bundle.

Overall Rating: 89%

Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Aztech Labs
Distributed by:	Aztech Labs
Retail Price:	$599.00

Ease of Use	Installation	Usefulness	Durability
87	86	83	N/A

Total packages like this are probably your best bet if you're building a system up from scratch; this is not a bad example of its genre. While I've never been happy with the compatibility problems many sound card manufacturers have had with many games, the Sound Galaxy family does well enough. Some games refuse to work properly, but that's nothing new for peripherals. The speakers are decent if uninspired. The packed-in software contains many good programs and games to make sure you use that double-speed CD-ROM right off the bat. This is a good package for anyone unafraid to tinker with the fundamentals of your system. ***-Kevin***

Ease of Use	Installation	Usefulness	Durability
94	84	94	N/A

The SGP16 MMU was only moderately difficult to install, and for that I thank the folks at Aztech Labs. As far as sound goes, it would appear that AL has improved their Sound Blaster emulation scheme since the NXPro 16 came out (see CGR Nov. '93); this card produces sound that would elate any connoisseur. The setup software worked like a charm on the first try (unlike some other boards I've tested). The CD-ROM drive is manufactured by Philips and is first rate. The included speakers and microphone are not studio quality, but they do a passable job of delivering what they promise. The games included are decent, but the software from Voyetra is tremendous. ***-Ted***

Ease of Use	Installation	Usefulness	Durability
88	80	92	N/A

If you're new to computing, you could do a lot worse than picking up this package. The sound card itself is indicative of the overall quality that Aztech Labs puts into their boards—Ted installed it and for several days I was not aware that our SB Pro had been removed. The CD-ROM drive is also very nice, and the ability to play music CDs is a great addition (of course, my perception may be a bit skewed on that. We've used it for that purpose while playing games on another system). Once installed, this system is as easy to use as any around—take it from a technical idiot like myself. If you've got some of the pieces, the price might be steep, but it's quality throughout. ***-Steve***

There's more to games than a mouth that sort of moves or tinny sound. Now there's a new way to play PC games that's just like sitting in a theater controlling the action with your joystick.

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CREATE YOUR OWN BREED OF CYBERLIFE.

WAITE GROUP'S ARTIFICIAL LIFE LAB OFFERS A LIBRARY OF WINDOWS-BASED POTENTIAL.

Ever want to explore the mysteries of life? If you run Windows at home or at work and have a desire to delve into the depths of artificial existence, the Waite Group Press has the package for you. Artificial Life Lab gives you the chance to play creator with dozens of cybernetic entities. ALL comes with a book explaining the main points of artificial life as well as a disk of pre-created lands that can be fully modified. Rich sound effects are provided with Sound Blaster support, and for added graphic fun, red/blue anaglyph glasses are included, making the world you create appear in 3-D.

Artificial Life Lab by Waite Group Press	
Requirements:	Windows 3.1, 2 MB RAM
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Rudy Rucker
Distributed by:	Waite Group Press
Retail Price:	$34.95
Hard Drive Space:	1.5 Meg
No. of Players:	One player

Created by Rudy Rucker, ALL not only shows the average computer user the logic behind artificial life and intelligence, but also offers ways to develop and test such intelligence. The included Boppers disk contains some life forms already created. These creatures can be placed into a variety of environments and can be adapted in a number of ways to both test their survival and how well they grow and change to each alteration in habitat. You can explore the various uses for such life including chaos theory, virus creation, robotics and image generation.

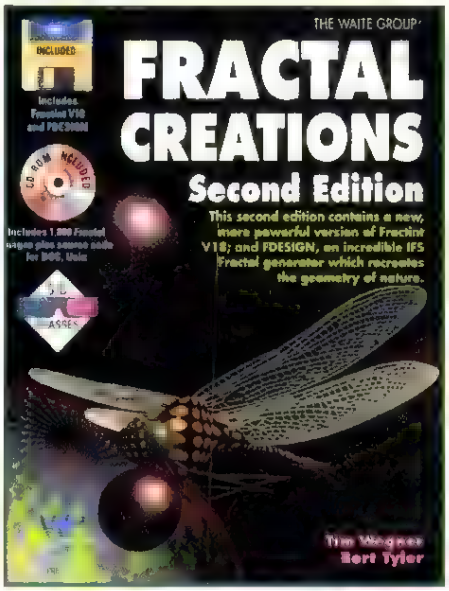
Progress of your creations is monitored with a constantly updated score, population graph and genetic information. Mutate your little critters to make them smarter, faster, mate more frequently or increase the amount of bizarre mutant children they will spawn.

With the Artificial Life Lab, the only limits on the beings you can give life to are those of your own imagination.

THE GEOMETRY OF NATURE COMES TO LIFE ON THE PC.

WAITE GROUP'S SECOND VERSION OF FRACTAL CREATIONS CONTAINS 1,800 DAZZLING IMAGES.

Fractal images are often among the most striking pieces of computer-generated art, but they can be created by surprisingly easy mathematical formulas. While they look complex, they really aren't. Fractals are colorful images of infinite detail; drawing close to a fractal image merely displays a new level of design and complexity. In short, they are computer generated versions of patterns that often appear in nature, sort of a PC M. C. Escher with a natural slant.


THE WAITE GROUP
FRACTAL CREATIONS
Second Edition
This second edition contains a new, more powerful version of Fractint V18; and FDESIGN, an incredible IFS Fractal generator which recreates the geometry of nature.
Tim Wegner
Bert Tyler

Fractal Creations by Waite Group Press	
Requirements:	512K, CD-ROM (optional)
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Tim Wegner, Bert Tyler
Distributed by:	Waite Group Press
Retail Price:	$39.95
Hard Drive Space:	N/A
No. of Players:	One player

Despite the apparent complexity of fractal designs, anyone can create them with the right software and system behind them. With the assistance of Fractal Creations, the second edition of which has just been released by Waite Group Press, you can develop an infinite number of fractal images of your own design.

Fractal Creations is more than simply a book explaining what fractals are and how they operate. Included with the book is a disk containing the world's preeminent fractal generator, Fractint 18.21 and Fdesign, software that mimics natural fractals in rain, clouds, waves and more. In addition to the disk, Fractal Creations includes a CD-ROM of over 1,800 fractal images in .GIF format as well as the Fractint source code.

Once you've created your fractal image, you can zoom in to see its microscopic structure, render it in three dimensions, tweak it, alter the color and more. The world of nature and design are there for the taking with Fractal Creations from Waite Group Press.

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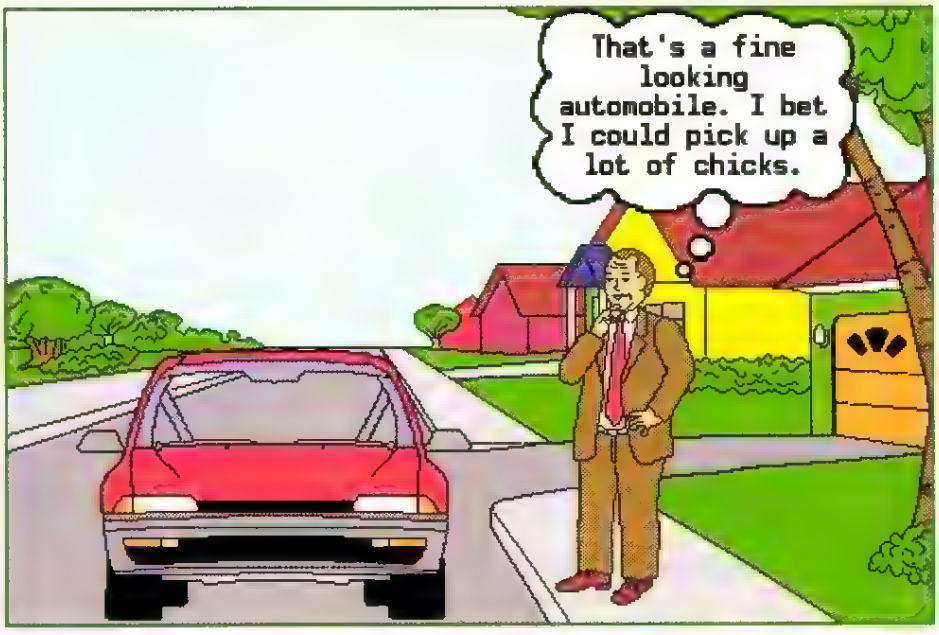
USE THE RIGHT SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN TO CREATE CARDS, INVITATIONS AND MORE WITH CARTOON MAKER.

If you're lucky, you have some ability to draw a decent picture, but if you are like a lot of people, it taxes your artistic talent to make a straight line with a ruler. Now you don't have to worry about your inability to create a convincing cartoon or make a decent party invitation. You don't have to rush to the store to buy a last-minute birthday card. With Cartoon Maker from Intracorp, everything you need is right at your fingertips.

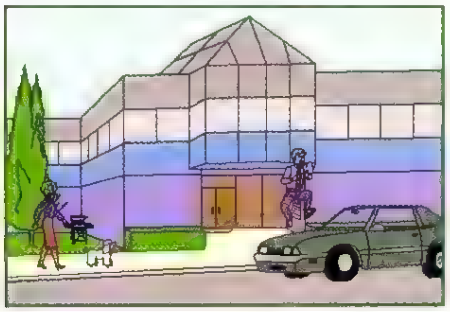
Add colors and objects to turn a plain scene into an exciting piece of art!

Cartoon Maker by Intracorp	
Requirements:	640K, DOS 3.3 or better, EGA/VGA
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Jemmasoft
Distributed by:	Intracorp
Retail Price:	$39.95
Hard Drive Space:	3 Meg
No. of Players:	One player



Using the large library of artwork, select the background you want your cartoon to take place on. Choose the people and objects to bring your cartoon to life. Any object or person can be moved, rotated or resized with simple-to-use icons. Each of the characters has a number of positions and facial expressions, allowing you to give your imagination free range.

After you've placed your objects and people, use the extensive palette to add a dash of color. When you're happy with the way your cartoon looks, you can add text, at the bottom of the cartoon or in word and thought balloons next to the characters on screen. Objects and people can be added at any time during the creation of the cartoon, and if you aren't happy with your color scheme, a simple click on the palette lets you change the color of an object to something else.



Once your work of cartoon art is finished, you can save the file in a number of different formats to be used on your PC. Or, if your system is hooked up to a printer, get a hard copy to send it to a friend. Make posters, invitations, memos and whatever else you desire with Intracorp's Cartoon Maker.

ADDITIONAL ALTERATIONS

PC gamers, rejoice! Maxis has released their quantum upgrade to SimCity, SimCity 2000 for the PC. In addition to all of the features you knew and loved, this new game provides a whole slew of others. Among these features are: new building types, complete control over your budget and city ordinances, hospitals, the ability to change the names of various municipal buildings as well as your sports teams, arcologies, streets that run on a diagonal, a terrain editor, bus systems, subways and a heck of a lot more. If you played and loved SimCity on the PC, you owe it to yourself to find SimCity 2000.

Also making its way to the PC is the Psygnosis strategy/shooter Hired Guns. Take four armed combat veterans into a hostile situation, controlling one or all four. Four people can play at a time, one controlling each of the different characters in the game.

As of this writing, Deadly Games has not quite finished up M4 for Windows, but by the time you are reading this, it should be out. Don't pass up the chance to drive a tank through Europe in the 1940's!

It took 1400 years, but we finally got them together!

Picture this: two of history's most ruthless and ambitious leaders in the same room. Now, throw in the fact that both are looking towards world domination with massive armies following their every command. Sounds interesting, doesn't it. This winter, Koei's bringing Genghis Khan and Cao Cao together to a store near you, and it's going to be exciting. After all, Genghis Khan is out to lead his Mongol hordes victoriously across Asia and Europe in GENGHIS KHAN II: CLAN OF THE GRAY WOLF and Cao Cao's devising new ways to reunite China after the collapse of the Second Han Dynasty in ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS III: DRAGON OF DESTINY. The contest for world domination is about to begin. Are you ready?

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Howie Mandel invites you to a strange land.

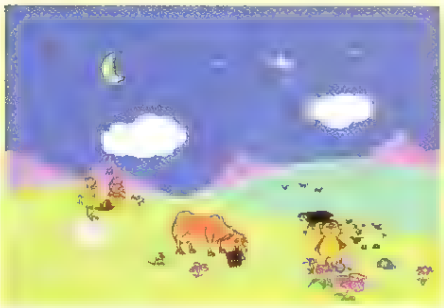
7th Level teams up with a bevy of entertainment moguls to bring you Tuneland for PC CD-ROM.

Computer games are supposed to be fun, and those for kids should be even more so. While edutainment titles live up to the billing of being educational, they sometimes fail to keep kids' attention for very long. This should not be the case with the first product from 7th Level, Tuneland starring Howie Mandel.

Featuring the impressive voice talents of Mandel, Tuneland also contains the work of numerous famous musicians including Jeff "Skunk" Baxter of the Doobie Brothers, Jon Anderson of Yes and Scott Page of Supertramp and Pink Floyd. With talent like this, you would expect there to be a lot of music in the program, and there is. Tuneland contains over forty fully orchestrated and animated children's songs to sing along with.

Dozens of fully-orchestrated songs (like the Old Gray Mare) are included in Tuneland.

Tuneland by 7th Level	
Requirements:	386/25 or better, CD-ROM, SVGA
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	7th Level
Distributed by:	7th Level
Retail Price:	$49.95
Hard Drive Space:	>1 Meg
Age:	3 and up



Each of the locations has its own cast of characters and list of songs.

To keep kids playing, the entire screen area of each of the different Tuneland locations is a hot spot. A click anywhere will produce sound and/or animation. Each area can be travelled to with the assistance of one of the many creatures. When travelling, the character that takes you to a new location stays on screen and stays animated, negating the load time lag often experienced with CD-ROM products.

Several different activities run throughout the product. The main character, Lil' Howie, plays hide-and-seek with the player on each screen. While his hiding places may be easy to spot at first, finding him makes him try harder to stump you. Also a part of each screen is a spin-off of the Jack and Jill nursery rhyme, with the two characters trying to both find Lil' Howie and reach the top of the hill to fetch a pail of water.

If you don't mind having your computer taken over by your kids for hours at a time, 7th Level's Tuneland is a must-have game.

Each place on the screen is a hot spot–click anywhere and be rewarded with sound or animation.

Helpful creatures will assist you in moving on to the next play area.

Lil' Howie plays hide-and-seek with you on every page. His hiding places may be obvious at first (like the treasure chest on this screen), but they get tougher after each time you locate him.

Talking purple car lands on the moon.

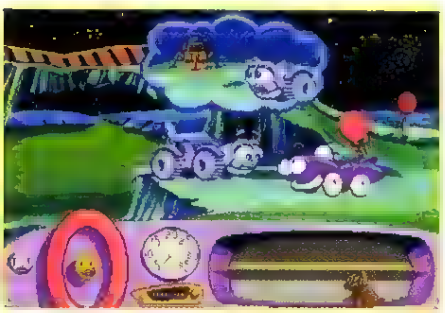
Join Putt-Putt and his new friend Rover as they search the Moon for a way to get home.

Putt-Putt will have many adventures as he explores the Moon.

The day started so well for Putt-Putt. He was invited to spend the day touring the Fireworks Factory. But due to a freak accident, a huge rocket is ignited and takes Putt-Putt to the Moon!

After wandering around for awhile, Putt-Putt meets a new friend, Rover. Rover has been on the Moon ever since the astronauts brought and left him there. Rover wants to go back home to Earth, just like Putt-Putt.

Rover knows of a rocket that could take them back. But the rocket is missing some parts. So Putt-Putt and Rover decide to team up and search the Moon for the parts they need.

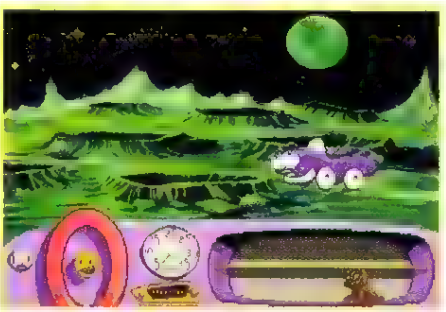


Putt-Putt finds a new friend, Rover, who was left on the Moon by astronauts.

Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon by Humongous Entertainment	
Requirements:	640K, VGA, Hard Drive, 286 or better
Available for:	PC and compatibles
Designed by:	Humongous Entertainment
Distributed by:	Humongous Entertainment
Retail Price:	$39.95
Hard Drive Space:	12 Meg
Age:	3-8

There are over 30 unique locations to travel to, each with different activities.

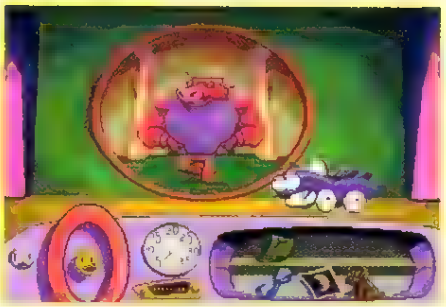
Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon is an adventure game designed especially for children between the ages of 3 and 8. During the course of the game, players will solve several kid-sized logic puzzles, as well as learn the benefit of cooperation and the lasting value of friendship.



Putt-Putt (and his puppy companion) explore the surface of the Moon.

Putt-Putt travels through over 30 unique locations in his journeys. Each one is filled with several Click-Points, so that the child can activate a variety of colorful animations and sounds with the mouse.

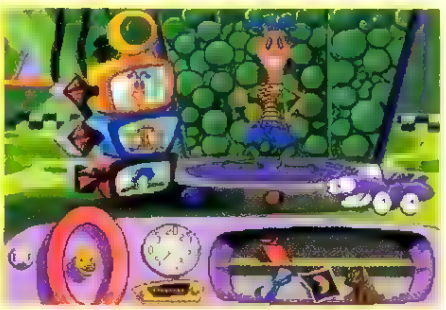
Also included is a kid's arcade game, featuring the flying talents of Fatty Bear.



Interact with plenty of talking characters–no sound card required!

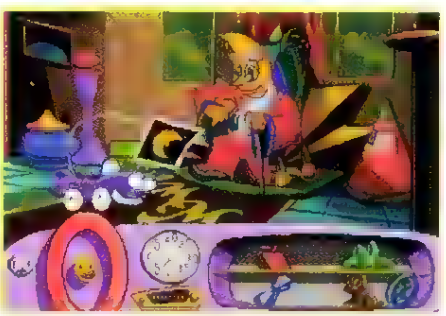
Putt-Putt must also talk with plenty of Moon people. He'll talk to them, learn from them, play with them and even help them out of some trouble. Each one will actually talk to Putt-Putt, and no sound card is required.

Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon presents young children not only with a colorful and fun set of activities, but also with puzzles that will enhance logical skills and creative problem-solving. There are also several side games to play, such as a children's arcade game featuring Fatty Bear and a Do-it-Yourself Beauty Salon.



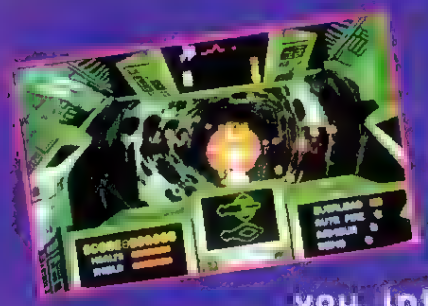
Putt-Putt can play several games and activities that don't directly relate to the plot.

Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon comes packaged with a Junior Adventurer's Tool kit, including an Official Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon floaty pen, stickers and temporary tattoos. Also included is the Junior Adventurer's Handbook, which is a 48 page educational activity book. Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon is available in either floppy disk or CD-ROM based versions.



Before the quest is over, Putt-Putt will get to talk to the kindly Man in the Moon.

Holy Sphinx



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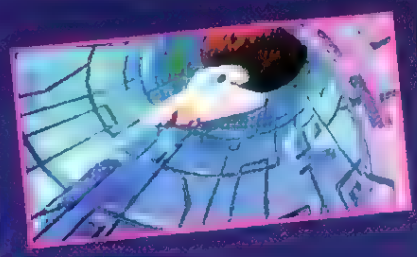

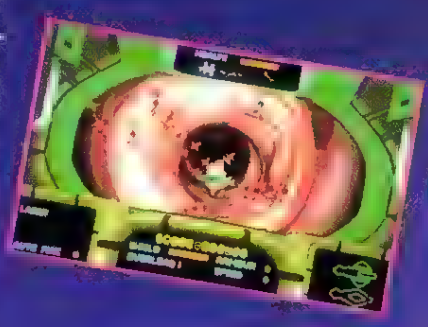

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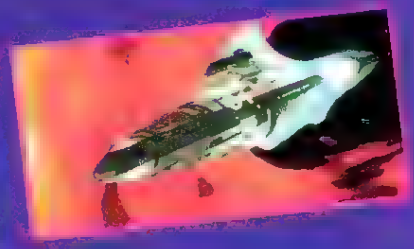

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NOTHING IS CONSTANT EXCEPT CHANGE. . .

ARNIE KATZ MAKES HIS PREDICTIONS ABOUT CHANGES AHEAD IN THE ELECTRONIC GAMING FIELD.

(When company presidents need analysis of hot trends and future possibilities, one of the names on speed dial is "Arnie Katz." Writer, lecturer, designer, consultant and, now, editor of ***Electronic Games,*** *Arnie gives readers of* ***Computer Game Review and CD-ROM Entertainment*** *an insider's look at the world of electronic gaming. This month, Mr. Interactive Entertainment tries to predict what's ahead for the interactive electronic industry.)*

To industry executives, predicting the future of gaming isn't idle chitchat or even a pleasant article in a leading computer entertainment magazine. It means survival for their companies. It's not only possible, but *common*, for individual companies to flounder while the field in which they operate prospers. Just ask all the automobile manufacturers and brewers that went broke in the last century.

Companies fail because they lose touch with the public's desires. If they don't produce products consumers want to buy, sales plummet. Remember Imagic? Sirius Software? Crystalware? Just three of many game-makers who've disappeared since interactive electronic entertainment became a big-bucks business.

So electronic gaming people talk about trends. Put two of them together, and they'll talk all night about what they think's going to happen. Put three together, and it's a workshop at the Consumer Electronics Show. What are they talking about now? Funny you should ask, because that's the real subject of this month's column...

Gamers are getting older. Without losing appeal for teenagers and grade schoolers, games now attract a high school, college, and adult audience. The computer gaming segment has always skewed older, but now the mass market is going that way, too. The average Sega Genesis owner is 18—and the typical Sega CD gamer is 24! Sure, there are plenty of platform games, with their crude conquer-the-level-and-beat-the-boss mentality, and there are lots of formulaic fighting contests, but adventure/RPGs, strategy games, and sports simulations are the rising categories. The sophisticated action of the simulator won't eliminate pure arcade shooters, but an increasing number of players prefer their depth.

Look for more games aimed at specific age-demographics. That means more kideo titles, and more entertainment products with mature content. This will be most evident with multimedia and 32-bit hardware platforms. Both hardware categories are expected to penetrate the adult market more successfully than cartridge consoles.

The play-environment is changing. High-end gaming is coming out of the den, away from the computer workstation, and into America's living rooms. As I said last issue, I feel computer gaming will remain viable for many years, but it won't expand much, at least not along traditional lines.

The last decade has proven, at least to me, that the number of people who want to sit at a desk, stare at a small screen, and play solitaire electronic games is limited. I'm one of them, but it would be foolish not to notice that 10-20 times as many people play video games. Multimedia is about capturing the mass market and making interactive electronic entertainment as important as the VCR. Ten years ago, 100,000 was a good sale for a computer game, and the same total would gladden almost every software publisher's heart today. That won't change in the next few years, either.

Games must get even more intuitive and easy to learn to appeal to the living room audience. Simple rules, clear cut goals, and point-and-click interfaces figure to gain at the expense of keyboard order entry and tiered menus. Written documentation is an insurmountable hurdle for some, so interactive tutorials will supplement the written instructions.

Multi-player contests will contribute a much fatter slice of sales two years from now. Bringing the hardware into the room where families congregate works against extended solitaire play. The popularity of head-to-head competition and multi-player games will explode. People want to play games, not watch them, no matter how fantastic the art and music .

The hardest factor to evaluate is the potential impact of telecommunications. This is such a powerful force that the net result of many expected effects is tough to judge in advance.

Downloading games over a cable wire will soon be an everyday fact for subscribers of planned Sega and Sony networks. These games will have to play well on a standard television set. That means less on-screen text, which would hurt games that require a lot of explanation and commentary during play. It would also militate against game-systems that offer a list of menu choices.

In the short run, however, networks are expanding at an incredible rate. Prodigy recently signed up its 2 millionth user, and America On Line doubled to 600,000 subscribers in the last 12 months. This has two implications for our hobby: a lot more on-line games and many more disk-based games that support modem play.

The last factor I want to examine is harder to pin down than any of the others: fashion. Game categories, graphic styles, and so forth go in and out of style like clothing and cars. Right now, fighting games are the hottest ticket, but that craze looks like it's going into its final phase. The games have settled into a rut that keeps hardcore fans happy, but converts few who aren't already caught up in the genre.

Sports account for 40% of electronic game sales. That percentage will hold, if not increase a little, between now and 1996. Look for more baseball, less basketball. It doesn't take Jeanne Dixon to guess that summer Olympics titles will be a hot item in mid-1996.

The six-character RPG may prove a casualty of the campaign to win a mass audience for interactive entertainment. First-person adventures, multi-player offshoots of today's Wolfenstein 3-D and Ultima Underground II, will overtake them in popularity. Most adventures will use an interface like Return of the Phantom, easy to manipulate with lots of AI to simplify the options.

Within two years, Silicon Graphics' distinctive look will be as common as polygons are in 1994. Some companies will try alternative approaches, but pseudo-three-dimensionality is guaranteed to figure in there, somewhere.

And that's my view of Electronic Gaming 1996. If you've got a prediction or two you'd like to share, write to me in care of **CGR**, and I'll share any good ones that come in with the readers in a future column. - ***Arnie Katz***

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FANDOM WARS ARE MORE THAN FAMILY FEUDS.

IGNORING FAN FEUDS MAY BE THE NECESSARY GREASE TO AVOID INTER-FANZINE FRICTION.

Most letters and calls from electronic gaming fans are delightful. Even hate letters have humor value. The staff likes to read them aloud with a surprising amount of dramatic ability.

Recently, several fans have approached me on a less pleasant subject. "I just want to publish my fanzine and have fun," one told me on the phone. "I don't need all this abuse."

He meant the fan feuds. Friction is inevitable in a group with so many opinionated people, but that doesn't make name-calling and character assassination any prettier. Fortunately, most fans discuss, debate and argue without sinking to that juvenile level.

I have one small piece of advice for all those worried fans: Ignore the feuds. The few who glory in this childish activity will grow tired when they don't get the attention they crave. Stooping to poison penzines is fanning by their rules, when what most of us want is the spirited, but friendly, exchange of thoughts and ideas that makes electronic gaming fandom so enjoyable.

This column will continue to give preferential treatment to fanzines that generate positive energy. The world already has too much spite and venom to search for more of it in fandom.

3DO Forum #1
Edited by Tom Keller
9 Sage Brush Ct.,
East Setauket, NY 11733
Monthly, $1.50 per issue, 20 pages

This fanzine is billed as the publication of the Prodigy 3DO Users Group. Whether you're one of the early adapters of this high-powered multimedia system or just curious about all the hoopla, **3DO Forum** deserves a trial subscription. Tom modestly proclaims his inexperience, but he's done a fact-filled, entertaining fanzine on his very first attempt.

The graphics aren't much more than neat, but the quality of the writing overcomes any lack of pretty pictures. There are so many interesting articles and columns that it seems almost unfair to single out Mike Delaney's call for RPGs for 3DO, but his arguments seemed especially well-presented. Delaney authors other items in the issue, too, and may be the first contributor to build a reputation in the pages of **3DO Forum**.

The enthusiasm and intelligence that shine on every page of **3DO Forum** make this a welcome addition to the ranks of fanzines. If multimedia gaming is one of your interests, you owe it to yourself to check out this excellent amateur publication.

Paradox #14
Edited by Chris Johnston, Tim Johnson, Jason Whitman & Justin Schuh
316 E. 11th Ave.
Naperville, IL 60563-2708
Frequent, $1 per issue, 24 pages

In a column that definitely emphasizes new fanzines, I can't resist noting the arrival of one of my long-time favorites. Schuh and Whitman took a one-issue (hopefully) sabbatical, but the other half of the staff keeps the controversy boiling nicely with very little, if any, mudslinging.

There's always a lot of short, tasty morsels in **Paradox**, and this time is no exception. Among the best are an all-around evaluation of Mortal Kombat I and II, Chris Johnston's hands-on report on 3DO, two views of the Jaguar by Johnson and Johnston, and a commentary on Nintendo's changing role in electronic gaming. and a fanzine review column.

As a fanzine critic, Chris Johnston takes a more restrained approach than many such columns in other fanzines. He tries to find good and bad things to say about each publication, rather than praising everything to the sky or damning them to hell.

Paradox proves that even heated discussions don't have to get rank. It gets into your head without getting in your face. This is surely one of the best fanzines to try if you haven't sampled fanzines yet, and it is must reading for all active fans.

Sensory Overload #1
Edited by Nathan Hauke, Becky Thalman & Michael Jahnz
2915 E. Allerton Ave.,
St. Francis, WI 53235
Frequent, $1.50 per issue, 18 pages

Experienced fanzine publisher Nathan Hauke, aided and abetted by two newcomers, veers off in an exciting new direction with the first issue of a new title. Nathan's **Video Games Review** showed continuous improvement, but **Sensory Overload** is a big forward step. Michael's photo montages are a strong graphic element.

A lighthearted attitude and wider spectrum of coverage distinguish the new venture. Nathan's editorial about naming the magazine, a satire called "The Ultimate Fighting Game," and the wild letter column were particularly excellent. Eric Vigoda's column, on the other hand, didn't maintain the same standard.

Sensory Overload has its serious pieces, too. Especially absorbing reading were Frank Mastromauro's short piece about light guns, Scott Bohemer's analysis of the digital highway, and Jeremy Statz' provocative "Maxxium Mania" column.

Every first issue has rough edges, and **Sensory Overload** has a few. On balance, though, it's the best new fanzine received this month and recommended.

Turbo Reaction #1
Edited by Jason Duncan
423 W. Vermont, Canal Sq. #245
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Monthly, $2.90 per issue, 10 pages

A promising new fanzine that puts the spotlight on the too-frequently-ignored TurboGrafx-16/Duo system. Jason already has plans to expand to full multimedia coverage, but **Turbo Reaction** augurs well for the future. It is neatly produced with black and white photos and screen shots to break up the text. The content this time consists mostly of reviews, with some TG-16/Duo news, a Lance Rice review of an animé movie, and a rundown of the *Spectre* comic book series.

This is billed as the first of a six-issue limited series. Then comes the switch to his more eclectic zine. No reason to wait for that. Jason Duncan is an intelligent new voice in fandom, and his fanzine deserves our encouragement.

Attention fanzine editors: If you'd like your fanzine reviewed in this column, send it to: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. I read and save every zine sent, and I'll try to describe as many of them as possible each month.

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EA EXPRESSES AN INTEREST IN BRØDERBUND!

PLUS A STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SSI AND TSR THAT MAY CHANGE THE FACE OF CRPGS. . .

The biggest hit of news this month comes, as it often does, from the land of **Electronic Arts**. The computer/video game software megacorporation has announced that it plans to merge with **Brøderbund**. All shareholders of Brøderbund stock, should the deal go through, will receive 1.6 shares of EA stock. The totals? About 15.4 million shares of EA to the tune of about $400 billion all told. For the mathematically declined, that works out to just under $30 per share. Of course, this still needs to be put to a vote, and anything can happen, including a nix of the deal. The vote should occur sometime soon. Our best guess is that this deal goes through. We'll keep you posted.

It's at a time like this that one feels kinda sorry for the good folks at **Three-Sixty Pacific**. Why? Well, a couple of months ago, they left the affiliate label program at Electronic Arts and signed a deal with Brøderbund. Now they could be right back to where they started. Of course, they could always sign with somebody else. . .

The other major shocker this month is that the licensing deal that everybody thought was rock-solid, never-to-be-undone, perfect-in-every-way and a joy for gamers everywhere has gone up in smoke. **SSI** and **TSR**, who since Buddha knows when have been producing games together (well, SSI has been producing games licensed through TSR at least) are going their separate ways in the very near future. SSI will be able to finish up the projects with a TSR license that have already begun. So after **Ravenloft**, **Al-Qadim**, and the reported **Menzoberanzan** and **Dark Sun II**, you won't be able to go to SSI for some down-home AD&D gaming. The current rumor is that TSR is planning to try their own hand at producing computer games with their own license (or without a need to license, as the case may be). No representative at TSR could be contacted for comment. You'll know more as soon as we know more.

By the way, we want it known that we have a policy, not shared by every computer gaming magazine, that we won't review a game that's been out for so long that it's only available in bargain bins. Just thought you might want to know.

There is no truth to the rumor that **Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers** was originally slated to be **Gabriel Kotter: Sins of the Teacher**, but the thought amuses. Imagine bad jokes about the hero's family with voodoo intrigue. What can you tell us about. . . sweathogs?

There is a rumor circulating on at least one of

ACCESS Brings You a Virtual World Interactive Movie!

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"Lots of games push the envelope—Under a Killing Moon blows it to smithereens!"
—William Trotter, PC Entertainment

"A ground breaking CD adventure!"
—Joyce Worley, Electronic Games

"Under a Killing Moon combines the best elements of movies and computer games... It literally pulls you into the screen."
—Denny Atkin, Entertainment Editor, Compute Magazine

This category-creating Interactive Movie from ACCESS Software goes light years beyond any other product labeled "interactive." *Under a Killing Moon* takes you to the streets of post World War III San Francisco and casts you into the role of Tex Murphy, Private Investigator, who first appeared in *Mean Streets*, then *Martian Memorandum*. *Under a Killing Moon* is a Virtual World full of people and places so richly detailed, you'll feel like you're actually there.

the nets out there that **HBO** is looking at buying **Mystery Science Theater 3000** and showing episodes sans commercials. The prospect of this does seem rather interesting. Please note also that the MST3K creators, **Best Brains**, have been contacted by **MicroLeague Interactive** about doing a computer game project, but the MST masters declined for the present, commenting that they wanted to solidify a potential movie deal first. One wonders how such projects currently fare and how much MST's stock has dropped with the absence of show creator **Joel Hodgson**. Still, it's fun to contemplate, and the idea of the show without interruptions is a good one.

Having now played around with **7th Level**'s **Tuneland**, we are in anxious anticipation of the company's next project, currently in the works. The word (and the press releases) state that it will be done with a **Monty Python** license, and the though of interactive Python, potentially laden with quotes and vignettes from said crew could be brilliant, particularly combined with the talent at 7th Level.

Activision is unleashing a torrent of updated 2600 classics for the various game machines. Currently slated are **Pitfall**, **Kaboom!** and **River Raid**. Nostalgia is hot, proved in no small part by the success of **Microsoft Arcade**, so our question to Activision remains, why not bring out these games for the PC? We may be dedicated PC gamers here, but we all grew up with the 2600, and we all played a lot of Activision games. I'm sure many PC owners feel the same way. And if you are brining back classic Activision 2600 games, why not consider our personal favorites, **Ice Hockey**, **Skiing** and **Stampede**?

The latest from **Deadly Games**, not including the PC version of **M4**, is that there may soon be another **U-Boat** title available. Look for the possibility of German submarine warfare with a much larger map that may include the U.S. Atlantic coast and the Caribbean. I still want that Ironclad game they've been talking about. . .

In the last several months, the Los Angeles area has been plagued by fires, earthquakes, mudslides and tropical storms. One wonders whether the next disaster to hit the area will be rivers of blood or a plague of locusts. The current opinion around the **CGR** office is that this sort of epic destruction will not cease in the L.A. area until **Baywatch** is removed from television.

Mac users may want to look on-line for a gorgeous little screen-saver we've recently run across. Working within **After Dark**, it allows you to create random tabloid headlines that are fully editable, creating creations like: "Sixty-three years for notorious hedgehog murderer. 'I would do it again,' said **Kevin Perry**." Look for something called **Headlines** and download away. PC-modem users will want to download the variety of **Doom** hacks currently available, including the tremendous sound editor as well as the incredibly amusing hack that turns the hideous minotaur demons into giant **Barney**'s. I shoot you, you shoot me, we're a dysfunctional family. . .

That kills this month's episode of news and views from around the galaxy of computer entertainment software. Next month, we'll have updates and new rumors to keep you warm through those cool spring rains. Have a good one!

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Killing Moon

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MEMORY HELP FOR ULTIMA VII PLAYERS. . .

PLUS THE PAIN AND SUFFERING INVOLVED WITH SELECTING THE PROPER SCREEN SAVER.

Greetings, my patient patients. Another month has passed since last we discussed computer-related entertainment issues, so it must be time to tackle a new batch of Qs.

As we headed to the jacuzzi after last month's installment, we were discussing a point by Tom Deacon of Maspeth, NY, who heard some WCES scuttlebutt regarding a company that's converting Genesis games to computers.

The product in question is the GameMaster from Active Enterprises Ltd., a plug-in computer board which can interface with adapters which allow it to play Genesis, SNES, and even NES games on the old PC. The project is just getting up steam, but the folks at Active are living up to their name, and several computer manufacturers are already deep in discussion on the subject of bundling the board as part of their system package. Stay tuned...

And now, before we move on to New Questions, here's a Helpful Tip from one of our readers...

Q: In a letter in a recent issue of ***CGR***, Charles Varney Jr. suggested loading the mouse and doublespace driver into high memory to play Ultima VII. But EMM386 will not work with Ultima VII, so that is not possible. I have a solution to run all games without worrying about doublespace.

Make sure the uncompressed drive has enough room for the game. If it does not, run doublespace, compress the drive, and change the drive size. On the uncompressed drive at the root directory, type MD DOS. Copy all useful drivers and files to this directory from the compressed driver (HIMEM, EMM386, MEM, etc.). Put a formatted disk in drive A and at the C prompt, type SYS A:. [Then] switch to the A drive and type DELTREE DBLSPACE.BIN at the root directory and answer Y to the following question. Now edit the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT, but do not include the doublespace driver. Also, make sure any drivers are pointed to C:\DOS, even though the drive letter of the uncompressed drive is a different letter.

Boot the computer from the floppy and the uncompressed drive will become the C drive. Now any game can be installed without worrying about the doublespace driver. Plus there is no performance penalty since it is running on the uncompressed drive.

Matthew Obermeyer
Racine, WI

A: *Thanks for the tip, Matthew—I'll get a Game Doctor Prize Packet in the mail to you right away. But this business really alarms me, and sparked a memory of a recent incident that may prove instructive. The Doc had just acquired a hot, new computer: a fully-loaded 486DX2/66 with double-speed CD drive, 8 megs of RAM, and enough hard drive space to hold an interstellar census database for the Milky Way.*

Now, I thought, the pain is over. No longer will I sweat it out while each new program installed, waiting for the telltale beep that presages the appearance of a pop-up window informing one that their computer is woefully inadequate to the task of running this superior software product. For at least a few months, I presumed, no game could defy me.

And the third piece of software I attempted to install on this new wonder system beeped and reported that I possessed insufficient EMS to run them. (I have encountered several patients who require mood stabilizing drugs at the mere appearance of the letters "EMS" on their monitors). Oh, sure, the program promised, I could make a boot disk, or screw around with the CONFIG.SYS or perform all the perambulations discussed in Matthew's helpful letter printed above. But when a 486DX2 with a double-speed CD drive and 8 meg RAM can't run something without going through a song and dance, you have to wonder what some of these software companies are thinking about. Who are these games being designed for, anyway? NASA?

Until computer entertainment software publishers learn that ancient bit of wisdom known as K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Stupid), we will continue to see a universe of millions of PCs where games are extraordinarily lucky to sell 50,000 copies. (We will also continue to appreciate suggestions such as Matthew's, just as long as no one mentions "fee splitting" or anything ridiculous like that.)

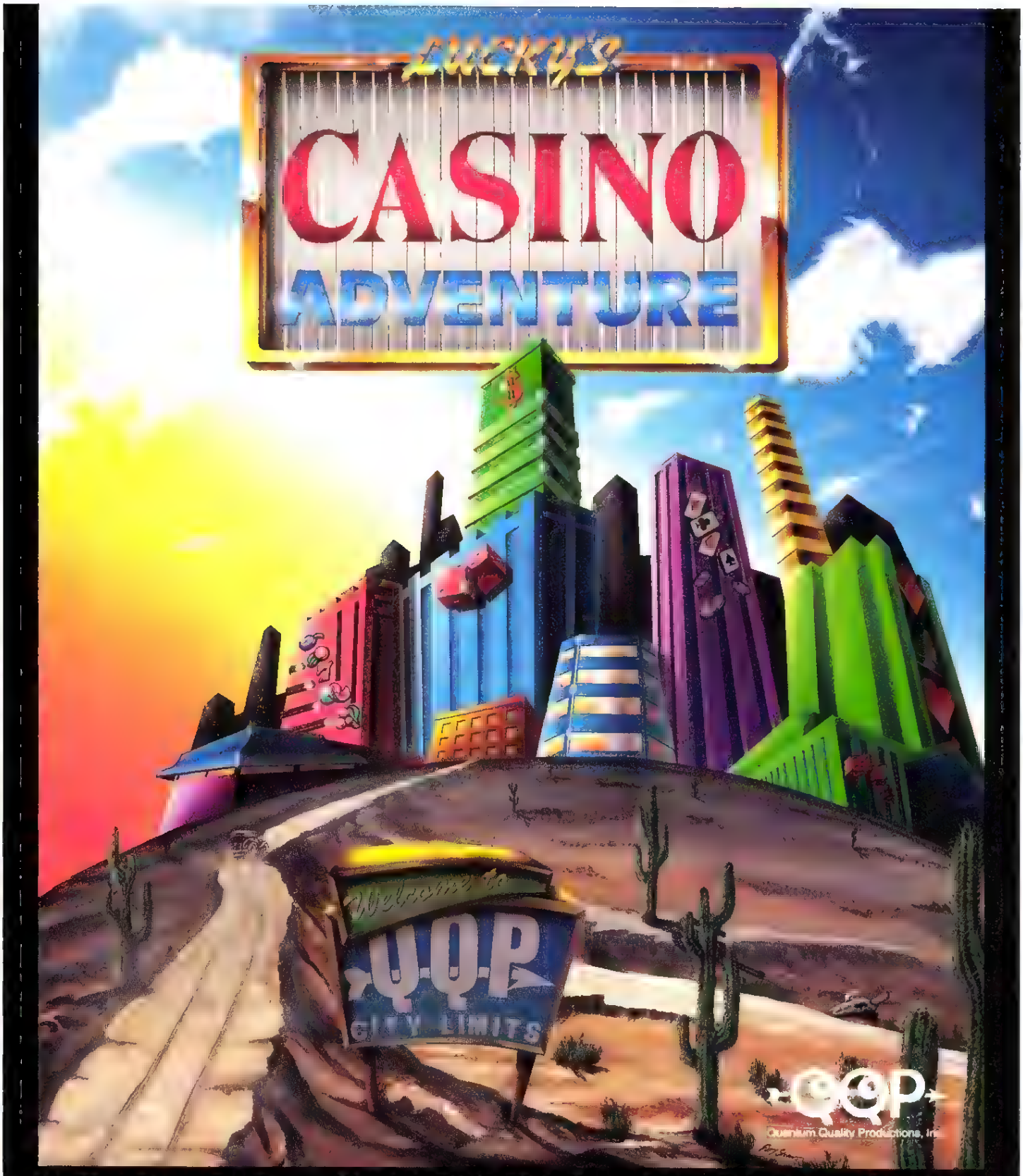
Q: Doc, there are so many screen savers out there it's getting ridiculous. I'm sure you see tons of them; which ones impress you the most?

Carlo Nicks
Brooklyn, NY

A: *Jeez, Carlo, there are just so many screen savers out there, it really depends on your personal taste. As for the Doc's personal favorites, there's Coaster! from Road Scholar (not to be confused with the Disney Software program—a legal hassle is brewing over the title to that title, by the way), and, for sheer visual power, Deep River's Fractal Sideshow Screensaver offers a computer-generated panorama of imagery that can keep me transfixed for minutes at a time with its constantly-changing kaleidoscopic light show fx. For the more informationally oriented computerists, I like Berkeley's Star Trek: The Screen Saver and Marvel Screen Posters. These savers combine excellent visuals with special features. The Trek saver runs 15 ST visuals, offers a message display and a system IQ activity monitor, while Marvel Screen Posters boasts classic Marvel covers and page art, previous-unpublished artwork as well as Marvel Comic trivia. Both Berkeley savers are also compatible with that publisher's After Dark 2.0, allowing AD visuals to be easily imported.*

Q&A QUICKIES: Send those questions, comments, and corrections to: **The Game Doctor; 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152; Las Vegas NV 89107**, and we'll see ya all in thirty.

Aloha.



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Ah, role-playing. For many of us, it's the very reason we starting playing computer games in the first place. When the urge to go exploring or to take on some powerful enemies wielding swords and magic strikes us and no one else is around, the computer offers solace. On the computer, you can take charge of a character or character party and lead them through a noble quest, satisfying any altruistic feelings on your part while quelling those baser instincts of causing death and destruction as well.

We've come to expect a lot more from our role-playing games. Simply providing us with characters to control and an evil wizard to slay is no longer enough. Die-hard RPG'ers are more interesting in exploring an actual world with their silicon personae. Linear quests, while they had their place in gaming, are too unlike real life to be considered for realistic role-playing. Gamers want to be able to immerse themselves in a different world, and for the most part, game companies have responded with bigger maps to explore, more towns and dungeons and an intelligent populace who go about their daily routines whether we interact with them or not. We want to forget we're looking at a computer and start believing that we are our character on screen.

Additionally, quests have changed. While most games still offer a final goal, many provide places to explore that are not a part of the main quest or offer an open-ended game, allowing players to continue to explore the world after winning. Most games provide, as the ultimate achievement, the prevention of some travesty of justice or the killing of a purveyor of evil, but game designers have become more adept at making this same storyline more interesting, more involving and at least apparently different from the many older RPG's that had the death of an evil wizard at its heart.

Diversity is the key. Some gamers look for cerebral challenge—we offer games like Blade of Destiny or Daemonsgate as prime examples. Others like nothing better than endless battle. For them, Dark Sun or Dungeon Hack (especially Dungeon Hack) fit the bill. Games like Betrayal at Krondor take works of fiction and turn them into interactive novels. While fantasy role-playing is by far predominant, games such as Rome, Pirates Gold and The Legacy provide worlds of exploration and adventure without the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons-like flavor. Great game series like Ultima, Eye of the Beholder and Might and Magic live on in their sequels, bringing joy to RPG'ers everywhere.

Computer role-playing games have made some quantum leaps over the past several months and continue to be released in as much diversity of style, view and interface as any other genre of game on the market. First-person, top-down, 3/4 perspective and combinations of the above have all been released in the past year. Digitized footage has been incorporated into many games, providing a richer and more realistic-looking world.

For anyone who has ever, even for a little while, wanted to be someone or something they aren't, role-playing is an exciting and vibrant category of gaming. With topics that go from humor to horror to adventure (and sometimes a little of everything), the role-playing genre truly offers something for everyone.

As with previous **CGR** guides to a gaming genre, all of the games in this section are listed alphabetically by company and then alphabetically within each company listing. For your convenience, the issue each game was reviewed in along with the scores it received from each reviewer is listed as well.

The Elder Scrolls: Chapter 1

by Bethesda Softworks

April, '94 Kevin: 98 Ted: 95 Steve: 90 Overall: 94

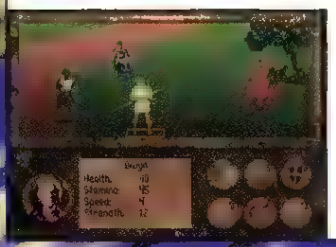
TES: Arena offers a vast world of realistic fantasy adventure using a 360° first-person rotational interface. Players select a single character from 18 classes and 8 races as their alter ego on a huge quest to save the Emperor. Players need not be constrained by the plot, however, as literally hundreds of extraneous towns, dungeons and quests exist to keep the interest level high in a game that never has to end.

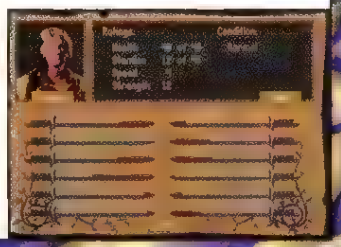
Betrayal at Krondor

by Dynamix

July, '93 Alex: 88 Rick: 90 Steve: 83 Overall: 87

Betrayal at Krondor is based on the Riftwar books of Raymond Feist. The main perspective of the game is first-person, while combat takes place in an over-the-shoulder view. Frequent cut scenes keep you abreast of the story as the characters progress through their journey. Betrayal at Krondor features digitized actors to help give the game a more realistic look and feel.



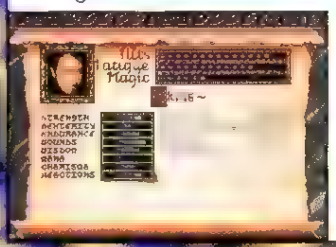


Daemonsgate

by Imagitec Design

December, '93 Kevin: 94 Ted: 91 Steve: 91 Overall: 92

As Captain Gustavus, you must journey from the city of Tormis, currently under siege by daemons. The daemons have already ravaged the neighboring province of Elsopea, killing virtually every inhabitant. Once your escape from Tormis has been effected, you must journey throughout the land, questing for the way to rid your world of the current scourge.



DAEMONSGATE
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Gold ... Of The Year 199...
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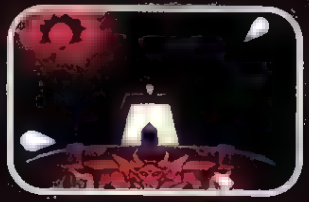

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Rome: Pathway to Power

by Maxis

May, '93 Alex: 80 Rick: 81 Steve: 78 Overall: 80

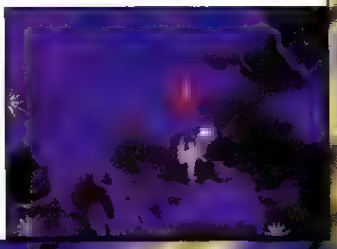
While your humble beginnings are those of a slave, you have no intention of remaining that way. The eruption of a volcano near your town gives you the chance to make good your escape. Now, bent for Rome, you must scratch and claw your way up the social ladder. Uncover nefarious plots, create some social mayhem of your own, and do what you must to achieve the pinnacle of social class in ancient Rome.

Bloodnet

by MicroProse

January, '94 Kevin: 84 Ted: 75 Steve: 79 Overall: 79

Gothic horror and cyberpunk merge into an interesting game experience with Bloodnet. As Ransom Stark, you are a recently created vampire intent on reclaiming your humanity. To do so, you must explore both the real world and the unreal CyberNet, looking for clues that will help you track down the elusive head vampire, Abraham van Helsing. Gather your forces against the dark empire.



Challenge of the Five Realms

by MicroProse

April, '93 Alex: 91 Rick: 90 Steve: 85 Overall: 89

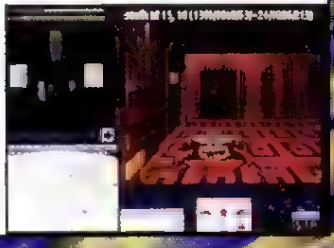
The foul creature Grimnoth has struck down your father, the king of Alonia. Now the entire realm of Nhagardia is in peril of falling prey to his wicked designs. You, as your father's heir, must travel across this land to each of the five realms it contains, enlisting support for your cause, correcting the wrongs of your father and searching for the clues you need to defeat Grimnoth.

The Legacy

by MicroProse

September, '93 Alex: 71 Rick: 66 Steve: 65 Overall: 67

You've just inherited a massive mansion. Unbeknownst to you, this house is a pit of evil, the resting place of a malevolent force of massive proportions. You arrive, unwittingly enough, to explore this new addition to your personal assets and find yourself embroiled in a conflict with your soul at stake. Encounter minions of evil as you fight to destroy the dark powers that lurk in your new home.



Pirates Gold

by MicroProse

September, '93 Alex: 89 Rick: 93 Steve: 75 Overall: 85

In the days of wooden ships and iron men, you take to the seas to make your fortune. Sail across the Spanish Main in search of adventures, combat and treasure as you lead your crew of pirates and buccaneers. Along the way, you must escape the authorities, battle honest traders and pirates alike and lay siege to hostile towns. Batten down your hatches and set a course for thrills.

Bloodstone

by Mindcraft

October, '93 Alex: 80 Mike: 79 Steve: 82 Overall: 80

In Bloodstone, you take the role of a young dwarf abandoned in the heat of battle. With visions of the magical Khamalkhad, an axe of power forged from the heart of the Bloodstone, you and your party of doughty adventurers must save the world of Tarq from the invading menace of the Taldors. RPG'ers familiar with the Magic Candle series will find a similar interface with crisper graphics and streamlined play.

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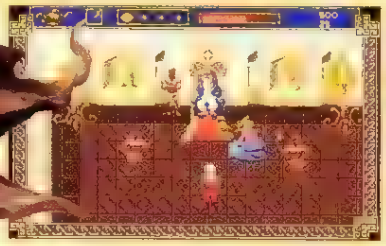

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Darkside of Xeen

by New World Computing

July, '93 Alex: 93 Rick: 91 Steve: 90 Overall: 91

The fifth game in the Might and Magic series from New World Computing, Darkside of Xeen concerns the side of the flat world of Xeen not explored in Clouds of Xeen. The Darkside has fallen to the powers of Alamar; Queen Kalindra, the rightful ruler, has been captured. It is now up to your party of six adventurers to thwart the plans of Alamar and restore the land to its proper rulers.

World of Xeen

by New World Computing

August, '93 Alex: 89 Rick: 90 Steve: 88 Overall: 89

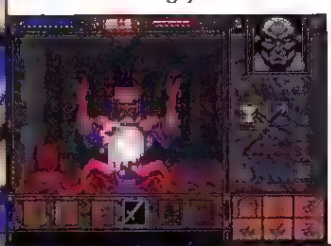
You've foiled the plot of the evil skeletal Lord Xeen and you've rescued Queen Kalindra and defeated Alamar on the Darkside. In World of Xeen, you can travel freely between the two sides of the flat world, undertaking the quests of both sides as well as tasks that require you to travel to both sides. Characters from either of the previous Xeen games can be imported for play in the World.

ShadowCaster

by Origin

January, '94 Kevin: 87 Ted: 94 Steve: 85 Overall: 89

As the last of a race of shapechangers, your existence is a unique one. Until now, your past and your powers were unknown to you. Armed with the ability to morph into different creatures, you are imbued with great power; power that the evil Malkor would like to crush. Explore multiple levels of a three-dimensional world as you seek to prevent Malkor's evil intent of ending your life.

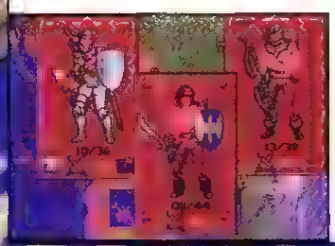


Ultima VII, Part II

by Origin

June, '93 Alex: 90 Rick: 86 Steve: 91 Overall: 89

A year and a half have passed since you stopped the Guardian's plans to travel through the Black Gate. His spoken threat against Earth has had the Avatar searching in vain for a way to leave Britannia and return to his homeworld. Now Britannia is again in peril, and you, as the Avatar, must travel to the Serpent Isle to explore the mystery of the unbalanced forces of Order and Chaos.

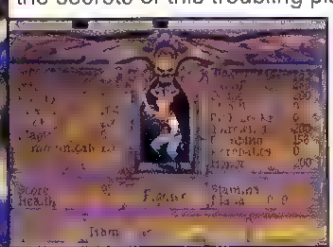


Quest for Glory IV

by Sierra On-Line

March, '94 Kevin: 83 Ted: 67 Steve: 76 Overall: 75

You arrive in a world of evil with no memory of how you got there. The people of this land, Mordavia, live in fear of the night. Garlic and other items of power festoon their houses. They need someone to restore goodness to the world, and as a professional hero, that's what you undertake. Determine the strengths of your character before you start and discover the secrets of this troubling place.

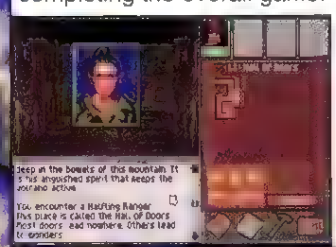
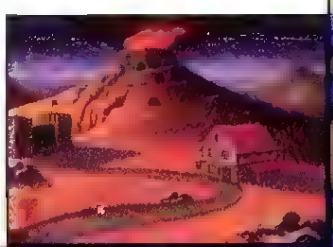


Shadow of Yserbius

by Sierra On-Line

December, '93 Kevin: 89 Ted: 92 Steve: 74 Overall: 85

On-line gaming comes to the single user with Shadow of Yserbius. Players can undertake the quest on their own on the privacy of their own system. Explore dozens of dungeons, retiring to the nearby town to heal and buy better equipment. When it comes time to complete your quest, go on-line via modem and band together with other hardy warriors bent on completing the overall game.

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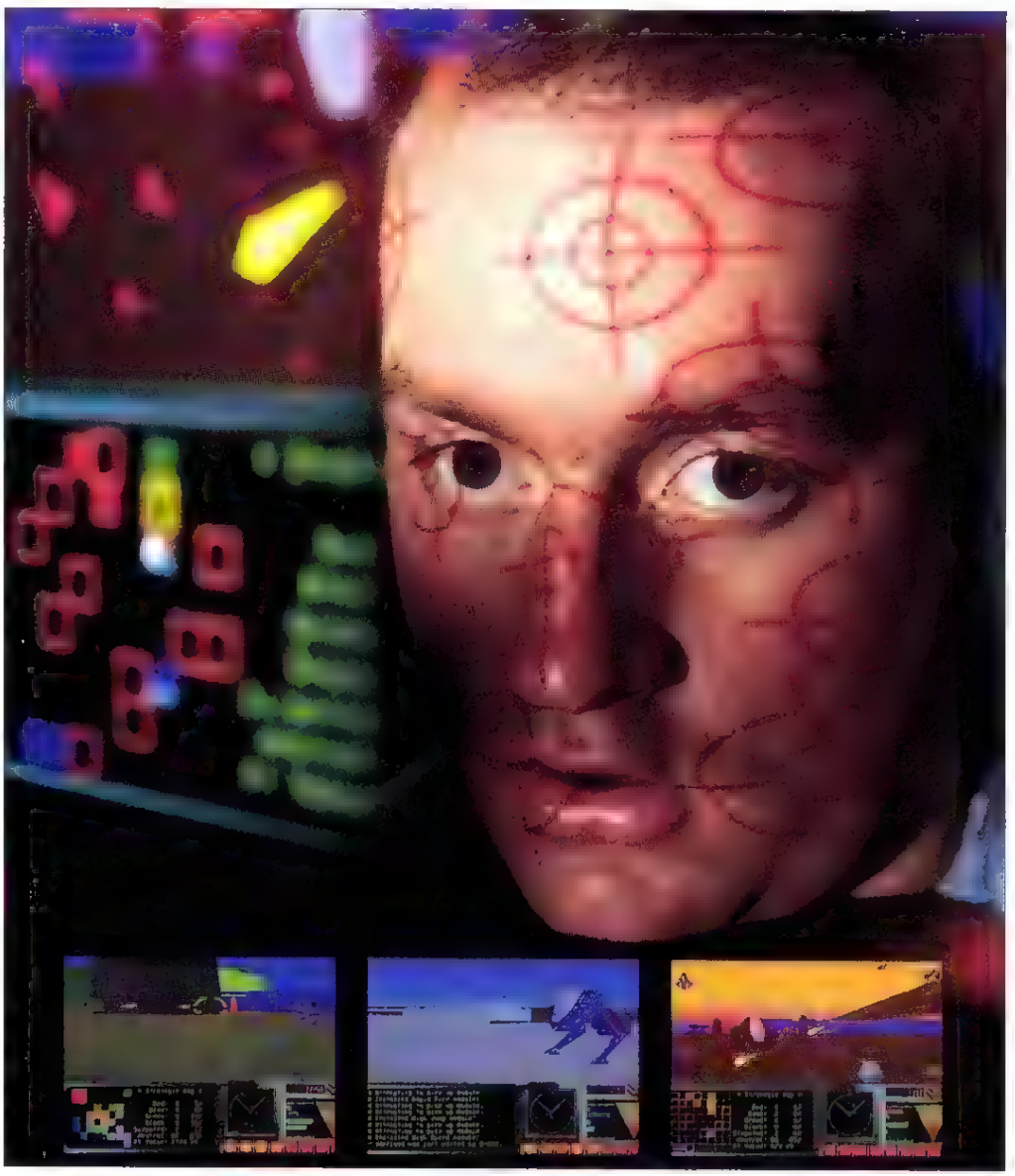

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Blade of Destiny

by Sir-Tech

June, '93 Alex: 91 Rick: 89 Steve: 88 Overall: 89

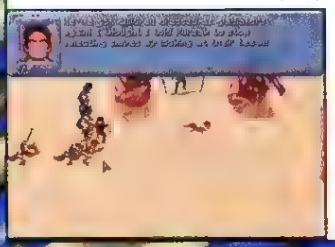
Realms of Arkania: The Blade of Destiny is based on the best-selling European RPG, Das Schwarze Auge. Create a party, choosing from twelve archetypes, each totally modifiable to allow you to personalize your party. Beginners can tackle the basic game, which takes care of smaller details automatically, while advance players can try the full game, giving them control over each aspect of the characters.

Dark Sun

by Strategic Simulations

November, '93 Kevin: 90 Ted: 94 Steve: 83 Overall: 89

The world of Athas is a dark, barren place where existence is often reduced to mere survival. Your party of characters begins its quest in the arena pits where it must battle against whatever creatures are thrown at it. Escape is vital, and once accomplished, players will find an entire world open to their exploration. Dark Sun is based on one of TSR's Forgotten Realms series of role-playing games.



Dungeon Hack

by Strategic Simulations

February, '94 Kevin: 92 Ted: 91 Steve: 81 Overall: 88

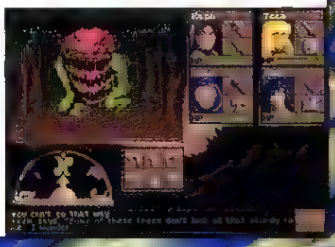
Advanced Dungeons and Dragons can be tough to play by yourself, especially if you just want some hack 'n' slash action. Dungeon Hack provides this with a vengeance. Explore a dungeon created to your own specifications and with a character of your choosing and creation. If you finish or aren't happy with the catacombs, change the parameters and start again in a totally new experience.

Eye of the Beholder III

by Strategic Simulations

July, '93 Alex: 87 Rick: 83 Steve: 82 Overall: 84

The final game in the award-winning Eye of the Beholder series allows players to take on the evil powers of Acwellan, a lich of incredible power. Acwellan has usurped the reigns of control in the city of Myth Dranor. Your task is to unseat him. Digitized footage, cinematic intermissions and more have been added or improved from earlier Eye of the Beholder games for a rich overall experience.

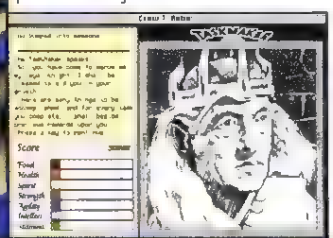


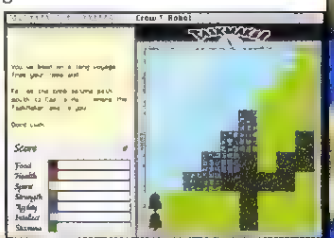
TaskMaker 2.0

by Storm Impact

December, '93 Kevin: 82 Ted: 89 Steve: 88 Overall: 86

The death of a benevolent king has created a world of confusion. Out of the chaos comes the TaskMaker, a man you have chosen to serve. As his name suggests, the TaskMaker appoints jobs for you to accomplish. Each one is fraught with peril as minions of evil attempt to thwart your plans. Discover vast troves of treasure, kill hundreds of monsters and grow in power as you serve the new king.



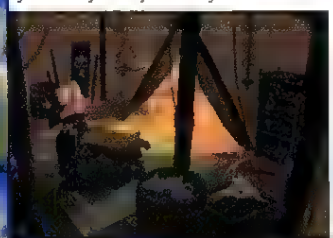


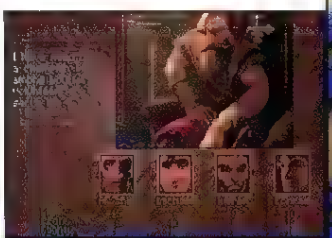
The Throne of Chaos

by Virgin Games

October, '93 Alex: 92 Mike: 85 Steve: 90 Overall: 89

Scotia, a witch of incredible power and evil, has discovered the Black Mask. This enchanted device allows her to assume any form she wishes. King Richard now fears for his control of the throne. You, as one of four predesigned characters, have been charged with the quest to stop Scotia's evil designs. As you travel, you may gather henchmen to assist you in your journey.





Whether you're facing a horrible fire-breathing dragon, a heavily armed MiG 29, or that really nasty dogleg on the 18th hole, there is one place you can turn to for help.

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TIE FIGHTER
BY LUCASARTS

DEVELOPED BY:
LUCASARTS

REQUIREMENTS:
640K, 386 OR BETTER, DOS 3.1 OR BETTER, VGA

SOUND SUPPORT:
MOST MAJOR SOUND CARDS

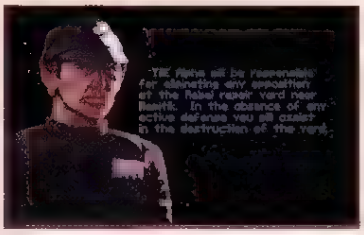
THEME:
SPACE COMBAT SIMULATION

PRICE:
$59.95

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING, '94

GAME SUMMARY

PLAYERS OF X-WING MAY WELL HAVE OCCASIONALLY FELT THE DESIRE TO SEE WHAT THE WAR WAS LIKE FROM THE IMPERIAL SIDE OF THE COIN. NOW, WITH TIE FIGHTER, YOU HAVE THE CHANCE. INSTEAD OF FLYING X- A- B- AND Y-WINGS, YOU NOW GO INTO COMBAT IN A VARIETY OF IMPERIAL SHIPS INCLUDING TIE FIGHTERS, TIE INTERCEPTORS, TIE ADVANCED, TIE BOMBERS AND GUNBOATS. TIE FIGHTER WILL BE STRUCTURED SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY FROM X-WING IN THAT THE TOURS OF DUTY WILL BE LESS STRUCTURED, OFFERING THE PLAYER MORE FREEDOM TO DECIDE HIS OR HER FATE. REACT TO CHANGING SITUATIONS AND NEW MISSION OBJECTIVES THAT COME ACROSS YOUR MESSAGE LINE. PREPARE FOR A CHALLENGE AS YOU FLY INTO A MELEE IN A SHIP THAT DOESN'T HAVE SHIELDS.

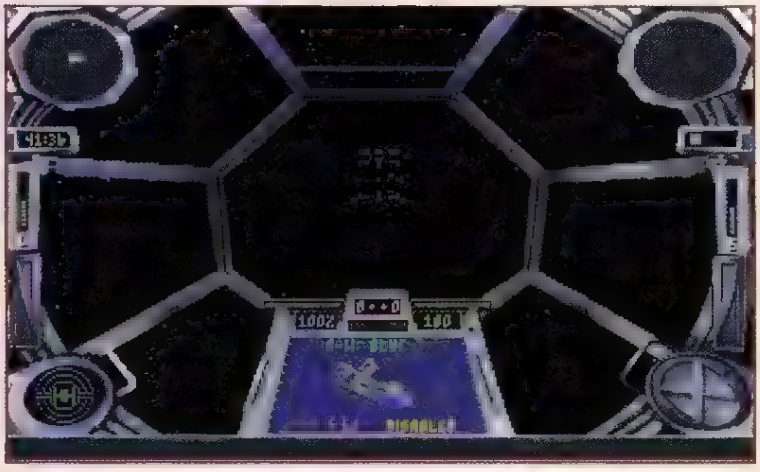


Get your mission assignments before taking off into space.

CRUSH THE REBELLION UNDER YOUR IMPERIAL JACKBOOT!

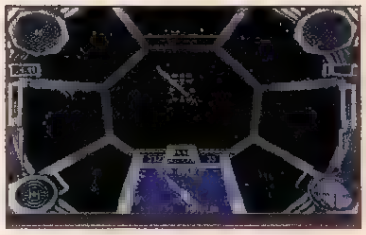
LUCASARTS' TIE FIGHTER GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO DO TO THE REBELS LIKE YOU DID TO THE EMPIRE IN X-WING.

You've had fun taking down Imperial ships in X-Wing, but every now and then, as a gamer, you've probably wondered what life is like on the other side of the coin. Sometimes those high-and-mighty morality speeches of the Rebellion heads of state get tiresome. And hey, sometimes its fun to be the oppressor. That's where TIE Fighter comes in. Now you get the chance to jump into the cockpit of a TIE Fighter and blow up those peace-loving Rebel scum that are trying to tear apart the Empire that has turned the galaxy into a fear-controlled group of planets from its former status as a bunch of mamby-pamby pacifists. Watch X-Wings explode in a shimmering display of sparks and S-foils as you fly through their remains. Learn the meaning of real fear as a squadron of Y-Wings lines you up in its sights and starts firing. Keep your eyes peeled for friend and foe alike, since a couple of accidental hits from your wingman is just as fatal as a well-timed burst from a B-Wing.



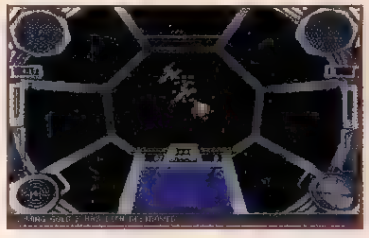
At the start of this mission, several Rebel craft are already disabled and are simply waiting to be destroyed. Of course, a lot more hyper in later.

There's just something about a good explosion that lets you know you've done your job as an Imperial pilot.



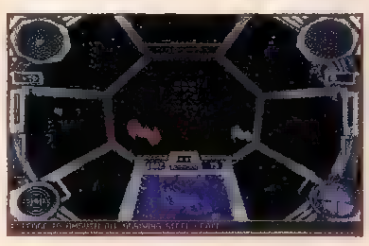
Y-Wings, big targets from one angle, are tough to spot from the side.

When you fight for the Empire, you learn one lesson very quickly: both the Empire and the Emperor care very little whether or not you survive. You are expected to give your life in the service of Emperor Palpatine without a second thought. Thus, your instincts for self-preservation have to take a back seat as you fly into combat in a ship without shielding and incapable of hyperspacing out of combat to safety.

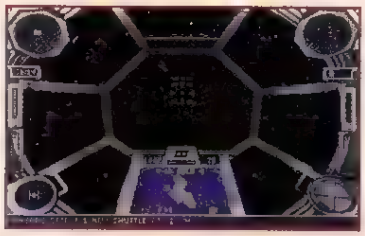


This formation is one ship lighter thanks to well-placed lasers.

In spite of your apparent weakness, you still have a decent chance to crush the Rebellion.



Keep an eye on other TIE Fighters or succumb to friendly fire!



New arrivals must be met in force to prevent their attacking your ships!

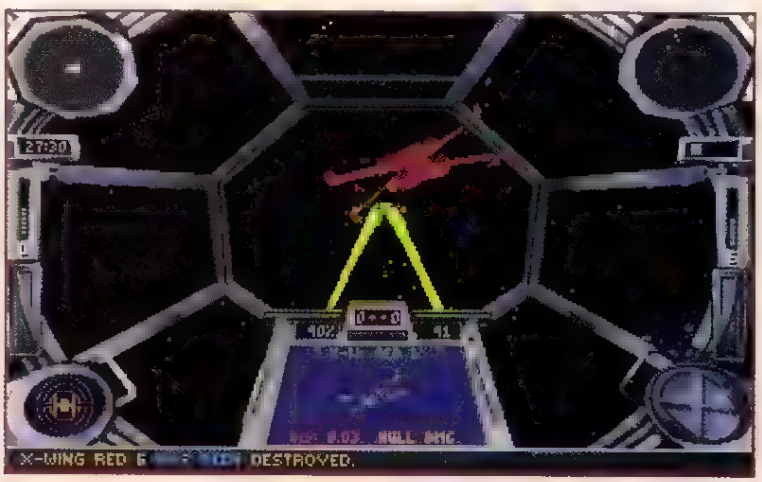
After all, you outnumber them greatly, and while they fight for such abstract concepts and intergalactic peace and the brotherhood of all races, you fight under the very real threat of grievous bodily harm from your superiors should one of your missions fail or should your objectives be left unfinished. You are, after all, more expendable than your ship.

While TIE Fighter will be similar in many ways to X-Wing, there are currently planned a number of changes to improve the overall interface and playability. Tours of Duty will now be less linear, allowing you more freedom in the path you take through the game. As you fly each mission, new objectives and directives from your wing leader will flash across your message line. You disobey orders at your own peril.

TIE Fighter is being created by the same talented X-Wing team of Larry Holland and Ed Kilham. The game will feature digitized speech and an original musical score. The polygonal graphics engine from X-Wing has been updated and improved, providing a richer visual experience.

Not all of your missions will take place in the dangerous unshielded TIEs. In addition to flying the Fighters, Bombers and Interceptors, you will also have missions that allow you to tackle the Rebel ships in the powerful Gunboat and the sleek and evasive TIE Advanced. There will also be included a never-before seen Imperial Starfighter of unknown capabilities.

Flying a TIE Fighter is exhilarating due to its speed and maneuverability, but very dangerous because of its lack of shielding. Always be wary!



As with Rebel ships, you can link your cannons for more powerful fire. As the message line indicates, this is the killing shot on this X-Wing.

Some Imperial Corvettes fire at closing Rebellion craft. . .

. . .while the Rebels send in their own Corvette to attack the Imperial fleet.

As with X-Wing, you can jump right into the action with one of the Tours, or you can take the more careful approach, honing your skills in these new ships with time spent in the training runs and historical missions. TIE Fighter contains three complete Tours of Duty, each headed by a different commander including one led by the Dark Lord, Darth Vader himself.

Those who have played X-Wing will find that TIE Fighter does have some features that take some getting used to. The colors on the radar, at least at this juncture, remain the same, so enemies now appear as green while friendly ships are in red. Similarly, the Imperial theme that once heralded more foes now announces additional friendly craft thrown into the fray, while the Rebel theme tells you that those annoying X-Wing pilots have come back for more.

TIE Fighter should be released very soon. The game will require 640K RAM, DOS 3.1 or better and VGA. Most major sound cards will be supported. A joystick is strongly recommended.

As the Jedi trainer Yoda said in The Empire Strikes Back, the Dark Side of the Force lurks in all of us. What would it take to push the average star pilot over the edge and make him or her wish to serve these forces of evil? Play TIE Fighter and discover what it's like to walk the dark path of the Force!

Flying Without Shields

It takes a whole new attitude to fly into a fierce melee with dozens of enemy ships around and not have the benefit of shielding. Anyone who has played X-Wing can list the benefits of shields beside the fact that they protect your ship. For one thing, you can transfer shield energy to lasers if you need it. For some of the missions in TIE Fighter, you'll be flying in TIEs, TIE Bombers and TIE Interceptors, all of which are shieldless.

It makes the approach to successfully playing the game much different. Since two solid hits from virtually any laser will evaporate a TIE, you can no longer fly head-on into your opponents, expecting to take a few hits before veering off. An additional worry is that friendly fire, once a mere annoyance, is fatal. The Empire cares little for its pilots—a high death toll is fine as longs as the Emperor's wishes are carried out. You can't count too much on teamwork from your wingmen or flight leaders.

In short, flying a TIE Fighter without shields is a thrilling and challenging experience, as long as it remains a game and doesn't become reality!

BioForge by Origin

Developed by:
Origin

Requirements:
486 or higher
VGA, Hard Drive
4 Meg RAM

Sound Support:
Most major sound cards

Theme:
Interactive Movie (Science Fiction Action/Adventure)

Price:
$79.95

Release Date:
Spring '94

Game Summary

Control a fully animated 3-D synthetic actor moving through a fully detailed 3-D world. Cameras cut automatically to various angles in this interactive movie. Players face a time-critical emergency situation and various strategic puzzles in a plot that flows according to player decisions. Set on a distant planet amidst the ruins of an ancient alien civilization, the player awakens from an amnesiac stupor to find himself transformed into a cyborg. Only with his superior physical enhancements and computer-aided skills can a deadly situation be faced, survived and reversed.

Origin unleashes a new interactive movie line.

Bioforge explores a new combination of cinematic techniques and modern computer gaming styles.

Lex awakens in a security cell after an operation. Bereft of his memory, he finds his body an unfamiliar amalgam of man and machine: a cyborg.

Experience a new style of entertainment in Bioforge. Star as Lex in an interactive movie. Not only will you control Lex and his actions, you'll also determine the tempo and pacing so that the plot flows as swiftly as you want. Maneuver Lex (a 3-D, fully animated synthetic actor) as he interacts with other texture-mapped synthetic actors with super-realistic motion.

Lex has awakened on a distant planet, in a laboratory set on the ruins of an ancient extinct alien race. As the plot unfolds, Lex learns that the work of the archaeologists has been halted by the machinations of a scientist who plans to use the forgotten alien technology to further his own ends. Lex must face a hostile morphing alien while trying to bring a time-critical emergency situation under control. The ruins also beckon, tantalizing Lex with their age-old secrets. But there is danger here; only Lex's enhancements give him any chance of survival in the various strategic puzzles as he outwits hostile forces.

Bioforge will make use of four-channel digital effects that are cued by distance, which means that footsteps will grow louder as they approach. The graphics will be very detailed as well, showing the volcano, alien ruins and other settings as deeper than just backdrops. Bioforge will also feature seamless integrations between the interactive and cinematic portions of the game.

OTHER GAMES MAY TALK.
THIS ONE HAS A VOICE.

Star Trek: The Next Generation's

PATRICK STEWART

in

LANDS OF LORE: *The Throne of Chaos*

With Patrick Stewart as the voice of King Richard, *Lands of Lore* has a royal advantage over other fantasy games. An actor of real authority in a role of authority, at the head of a huge cast of heroes and villains who speak, rant and roar their way through the most vocally interactive role-playing adventure yet devised. (A mammoth 130 MB of digitized speech makes it possible.)

The Dark Army is on the move, led by the shape-shifting sorceress Scotia—and each time you meet her she'll be more powerful and terrifying than the last. But your powers can grow, too. Experienced-based character development makes great warriors of those who take arms in real-time combat against a sea of indescribable monsters and makes mighty wizards of those who cast Larger-Than-Life spells. Explore ancient castles, living forests, hidden lairs, bustling towns, haunted caverns, through 30 enchanted levels made vividly real by more than 20 MB of compressed art and special effects.

For the PC CD-ROM

Westwood™ STUDIOS

Virgin

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A NEW GENERATION OF HORROR UNLEASHED IN A FAMILIAR PLACE.

REVISIT ALL 22 ROOMS OF STAUF'S DEADLY MANSION IN 11TH HOUR, THE SEQUEL TO THE BESTSELLING CD-ROM 7TH GUEST.

11TH HOUR BY VIRGIN

DEVELOPED BY:
TRILOBYTE, INC.

REQUIREMENTS:
CD-ROM, SVGA, 4 MB RAM, DOS 5.0, 10MD HARD DRIVE SPACE

SOUND SUPPORT:
MOST MAJOR SOUND CARDS

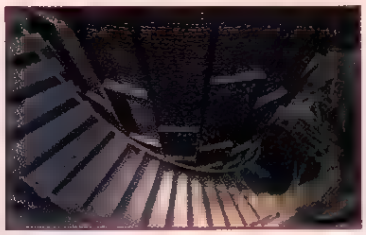
THEME:
HORROR/PUZZLES

PRICE:
N/A

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING, '94

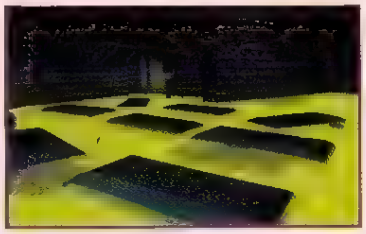
GAME SUMMARY

SEVENTY YEARS AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF 7TH GUEST, HENRY STAUF'S HAUNTED MANSION HOSTS NEW VISITORS. AS REPORTER CARL DENNING, THE PLAYER SEARCHES THE DILAPIDATED STAUF HOMESTEAD FOR HIS MISSING GIRLFRIEND ROBIN MORALES, LAST SEEN INVESTIGATING A STRING OF MURDERS IN STAUF'S HOMETOWN. AS DENNING ROAMS THE HUGE EDIFICE, HE MUST COMPLETE LOGIC AND WORD PUZZLES AND TREASURE HUNTS THAT SLOWLY REVEAL HORRIFYING SECRETS ABOUT THE TRUE STATE OF EVENTS IN THE MANSION AND THE SURROUNDING TOWN. SIXTY MINUTES OF LIVE ACTION VIDEO COMPLEMENTED BY A FULL MUSICAL SCORE DRAW THE PLAYER INTO THE TERROR OF STAUF'S UNSETTLING MANSION, SHOWN IN A REALISTIC SCROLLING 3-D ENVIRONMENT.

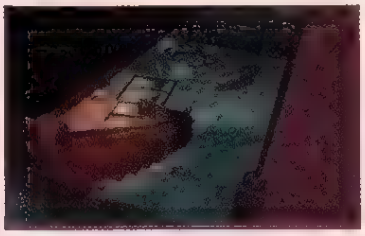


Henry Stauf's evil lives on. After a visitor to the house vanquished the evil spirits doomed to stay there (in the first game, The 7th Guest), the mansion seemed content to brood alone. But not to remain alone forever.

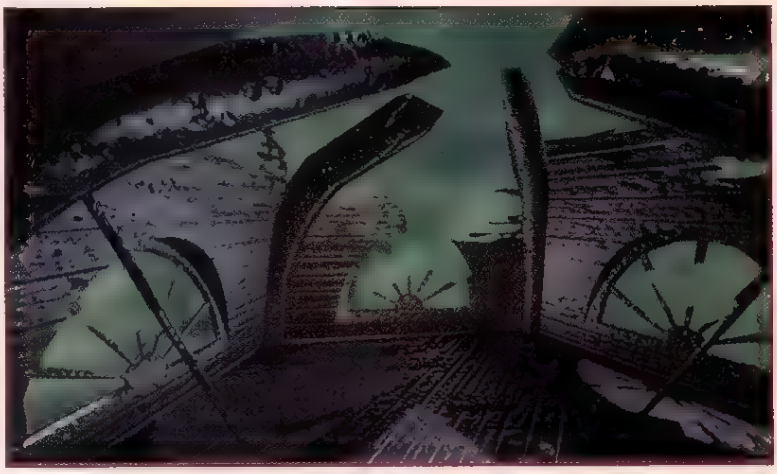
Robin Morales, a local reporter, has become interested in a string of murders occurring



in Henry Stauf's hometown. Then, suddenly, she disappears; clues point to the Stauf mansion. As Carl Denning, her boyfriend and fellow reporter, the player must re-enter Stauf's mansion and search for her and the clues to what has been happening.



11th Hour will feature sixty minutes of live video (filmed on location in Oregon) as well as a full musical score by The Fat Man. Players will explore the 22 rooms of the Stauf mansion, each beautifully rendered and painstakingly aged. As Denning solves the new puzzles, more clues will be revealed about the truth behind the murders and the house and town itself.



1942: THE PACIFIC AIR WAR BY MICROPROSE

DEVELOPED BY:
MICROPROSE

REQUIREMENTS:
386-33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER, ADLIB, ROLAND, PRO AUDIO SPECTRUM

THEME:
AERIAL COMBAT SIMULATOR

PRICE:
N/A

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING, '94

GAME SUMMARY

NOT YOUR BASIC AIR COMBAT SIMULATOR, 1942: THE PACIFIC AIR WAR IS AN INCREDIBLY DETAILED, INCREDIBLY FAST GAME. YOU CAN FLY FOR EITHER SIDE (US OR JAPAN) IN VARIOUS DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT. YOU'LL BE CALLED UPON TO NOT ONLY DOGFIGHT, BUT ALSO TO ATTACK SHIPS AND LANDBOUND BASES, AS WELL AS TO FLY ESCORT AND RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS. SINCE YOU OBVIOUSLY CANNOT EXPECT TO FLY FROM AIRFIELDS AT ALL TIMES, YOU SHOULD BRUSH UP ON YOUR CARRIER TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS. SUNDRY VIEWPOINTS AND EXTERIOR CAMERAS WILL HEIGHTEN YOUR ENJOYMENT OF THE GAME, AS WELL AS ADDING TO ITS REALISM.

Here comes your enemy. Try not to put your plane in the drink.

PLACE: THE PACIFIC. DATE: CIRCA 1942. MISSION: AIR COMBAT.

WHEN, OH WHEN, WILL MICROPROSE RELEASE 1942 SO THAT WE CAN GET A FIX OF INSOMNIA, STRESS, AND SWEATY HANDS?

1942: the Pacific Air War is destined to be the next great game from MicroProse. It's an aerial combat simulator in which you can fly for either side (US or Japan, in case you slept through American History in high school) in a number of different airplanes, including the vaunted Douglas Corsair and the small but dreaded Mitsubishi Zero.

The graphics look incredibly solid, and the adjustable views include the ability to scan your entire instrument panel. This may not sound like a big deal, but, since many airplanes have gauges mounted between the pilot's legs, it adds to the realism to be able to pan your vision that far away from the canopy.

"Targets in sight." Be king of the skies in the aircraft of your choice.

The wing floating off in midair is treated as a separate object.

Another feature that hopefully will make it to the final version is the "whole plane" approach to objects. When a plane breaks up, each item from that plane is treated as a separate and targetable object.

The view from the cockpit of the Douglas Avenger. When joystick control is transferred from the plane to the pilot, you can turn the pilot's head in free rotation.

A view to a kill: fully rotational in-cockpit viewing lets you see everything.

That Zero is leaking oil badly, and isn't going to survive much longer...

The Douglas Avenger sweeps down out of a clear blue sky, intent on its foe: two Japanese Mitsubishi Zeros.

Realism central: check out the smoke trailing from the Avenger's guns.

LIMITED TIME OFFER! ACT NOW!

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WHAT'S KIRK CAMERON DOING ON MY CD-ROM?

ANSWER THIS QUESTION AND MANY OTHERS AS YOU COMBAT THE FEARSOME HORDE FROM CRYSTAL DYNAMICS.

THE HORDE BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

DEVELOPED BY:
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

REQUIREMENTS:
CD-ROM, 640K, 4 MB RAM, VGA

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER AND COMPATIBLES

THEME:
ACTION

PRICE:
N/A

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING, '94

GAME SUMMARY

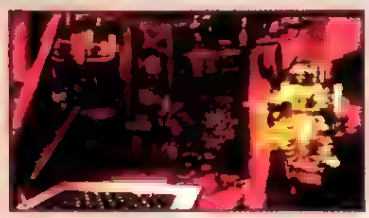
WITH FULL-MOTION VIDEO SEQUENCES FEATURING NAME ACTORS LIKE KIRK CAMERON AND MICHAEL GREGORY, THE HORDE OFFERS CD-ROM GAMERS A CONTEST OF ACTION AND STRATEGY. THE GAME FOLLOWS THE STORY OF CHAUNCEY, WHO MUST DEFEND HIS VILLAGE FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE HORDE, A COLLECTION OF MONSTERS, EACH WITH ITS OWN METHOD OF ATTACK AND WEAKNESS. WHILE NONE OF THE HORDLINGS ARE PARTICULARLY BRIGHT, THEY ARE BOTH RAVENOUS AND UBIQUITOUS, MAKING THE ARCADE PORTION OF THE GAME QUITE CHALLENGING. BETWEEN BATTLES, THE PLAYER CAN IMPROVE THE DEFENSES OF HIS OR HER VILLAGE AS WELL AS EXPLORE THE VARIOUS INTRIGUES THAT HAVE CAUSED THE HORDE TO ARISE. THE FMV SEQUENCES ARE DIRECTED BY MOVIE AND GAME VETERAN ROBERT WEAVER.

Hordlings: they may look funny, but they'll happily eat your livestock.

Tinseltown and Silicon Valley blend in the new action/strategy game from Crystal Dynamics. In The Horde, you take the role of Chauncey, a village hero, as he attempts to protect the village, its inhabitants and its farm produce from the vicious attacks of the hunger-crazed Hordlings.

The arcade portion of the game is played in an animated action sequence where Chauncey must rely on his sword and his pre-planned traps to prevent the Hordlings from eating crops and livestock. Between battles, new traps can be placed, troops can be hired and strategies can be worked out.

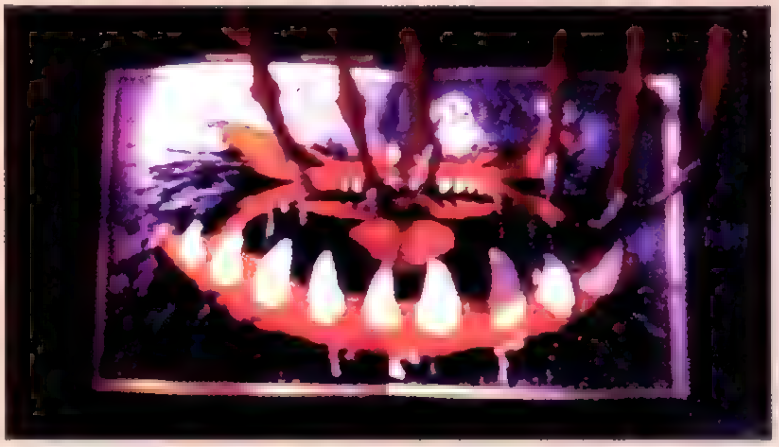
In addition to the animation, much of the game consists of full-motion video sequences starring name actors. In the role



of Chauncey is Kirk Cameron of Growing Pains. Other Horde actors include Michael Gregory (Total Recall, RoboCop) and Michael McCarty (Sisters, Quantum Leap). In these portions of the game, Chauncey learns of the intrigues of the Evil High Chancellor that have caused the Hordlings to be unleashed.

The Hordlings aren't very smart, but there are a lot of them. Each type has its own strengths and weaknesses. Among the nine Hordling types are the razor-fanged Piranhas, the Juggernauts and the Shamans.

The Horde should be released for PC CD-ROM very soon.



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HCGD1

DESIGN YOUR OWN AMUSEMENT PARK FOR FUN AND PROFIT.

BULLFROG SOFTWARE PRESENTS THE GAMING WORLD WITH A TICKET TO RIDE IN THEIR NEW THEME PARK.

THEME PARK BY ELECTRONIC ARTS

DEVELOPED BY:
BULLFROG SOFTWARE

REQUIREMENTS:
386, 2MB RAM, VGA, DOS 5.0

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER, ADLIB, ROLAND

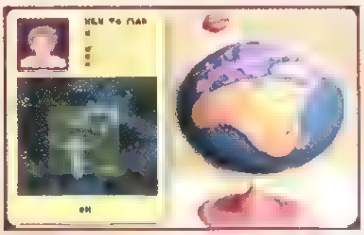
THEME:
CITY BUILDER/SIMULATOR

PRICE:
$59.95

RELEASE DATE:
MAY '94

GAME SUMMARY

DESIGN YOUR OWN THEME PARK. THOUGH THIS SOUNDS SIMPLE, IT ISN'T. YOU MUST PLAN THE PLACEMENT AND STRUCTURE OF RIDES, NEGOTIATE BUSINESS CONTRACTS, AND CONFIGURE STAFF-SALARY MANAGEMENT. YOU START WITH A CHOICE OF LOCATION (CALIFORNIA? FLORIDA? HOW DOES NEBRASKA SOUND?), AND FROM THERE YOU BUILD FROM THE GROUND UP. YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF DESIGNING YOUR OWN RIDES AND MAINTAINING THE ATTRACTIONS, AS WELL AS DETERMINING THE OPTIMUM LOCATIONS OF EVERYTHING FROM POPCORN STANDS TO SUSPENDED ROLLERCOASTER TURNS. THERE ARE THIRTY-TWO READY-MADE RIDES AND SIX CUSTOMIZABLE DESIGNS, INCLUDING A RACE CAR RIDE AND A ROLLERCOASTER. OH, AND ONE OTHER THING: DON'T LET THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT GET A TOEHOLD IN YOUR PARK.



Check out the land you'll be building on beforehand.

Ever had a hankering to design your own theme park? If the answer is yes, Bullfrog Software may have the answer for you. Theme Park, their latest venture, combines the fun of designing a theme-park around a city-building simulation. The

The entrance to your theme park is a many-splendored thing.

player must compete against forty other theme parks in the world and, as the player's park becomes more profitable, competitors attempt to buy shares in the park and take it over–unless the player stops them.

Your theme park advisor, though goofy-looking, offers sound advice.

There are three levels of play: sandbox, simulation and business simulation. The latter is hardest, as the player must build the park through marketing, contract-making, and staff-salary negotiations.

Your rollercoaster is the most obvious ride at your park. Make it a thrill.

Introducing the IR-5 Glide Zipper, from Rockfire. This two player, infrared remote control system features super sensitive, wireless, infrared remote control up to 20 feet! Plus, superior 8 directional control capability and ultra sensitive, but durable, fire buttons. The freedom and enhanced responsiveness of the Glide Zipper and Rockfire's other advanced and innovative control pads and joysticks will revolutionize your performance.

GLIDE ZIPPER

Rockfire
For dealer locations call Rockfire at 818-821-0177

BREACH 3
BY IMPRESSIONS

DEVELOPED BY:
OMNITREND

REQUIREMENTS:
640K RAM, VGA HARD DRIVE, 286, MOUSE

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER AND COMPATIBLES

THEME:
FUTURISTIC MAN-TO-MAN COMBAT

PRICE:
$59.95

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING, '94

GAME SUMMARY

LEAD SQUADS OF FUTURISTIC MARINES INTO COMBAT AGAINST HOSTILE ALIENS, HUNTER-KILLER ROBOTS AND MERCILESS UDP MARAUDERS. GIVE ORDERS TO MARINES WITH PERSONALITIES AND GOVERN THE ACTION WITH AN INTERFACE THAT COMBINES TURN-BASED AND REAL-TIME SEQUENCES. WHILE BREACH 3 CAN BE PLAYED AS A STAND-ALONE GAME, IT INTERFACES PERFECTLY WITH RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2, AND CONTAINS A MISSION AND CAMPAIGN BUILDER THAT ALLOW THE CREATION OF EXTENSIVE TREE-STRUCTURED CAMPAIGNS. A SIMPLE CONTROL SCHEME ALLOWS YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE ACTION TO WHATEVER LEVEL YOU WISH. EXCELLENT GRAPHICS AND SOUND COMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIC ELEMENTS OF THE GAME.

Build your own campaign, missions and even your own marine squads.

LEAD AN ELITE CORPS OF MARINES INTO DEADLY SITUATIONS.

WAGE A MAN-TO-MAN WAR IN THE FUTURE USING A WIDE VARIETY OF EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS TO GET THE JOB DONE.

The United Democratic Planets (UDP) has declared war on the Federated Worlds. As a Squad Leader of the Federated Worlds Special Forces, you'll use courage and insight to direct your squad of elite marines on dangerous missions ranging from rescue-and-support to seek-and-destroy. Each marine under your command has his own unique personality traits that determine his handling of novel situations as well as how well he follows orders.

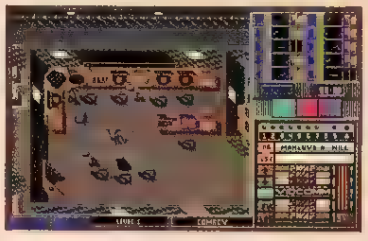
Breach 3, the latest module of Omnitrend's Interlocking Game System, builds off its predecessor with new features. It will interlink with Rules of Engagement 2, with experience in either game going on the character's record. Squad leaders from Breach 2 and both Rules of Engagement games can be imported into Breach 3 as well.

A new combat engine allows a blend of turn-based and real-time play. The battle will progress in real time as a default mode. Marines will react to orders as well as to the environment–if an enemy approaches, they won't stand idly by while taking losses from laser fire.

No matter what the mission is, your marines need good leadership.

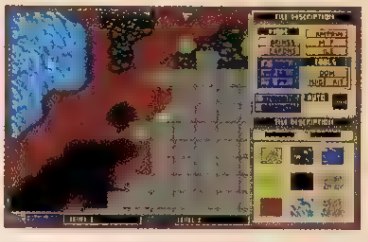
In addition, the player can stop the action at any time to give the marines new orders. If a grenade is thrown at a marine, for instance, the player can stop the game to order him to take cover. However, since each activity still takes time, the marine may not be able to get out of the way. The system can also be set to stop all action automatically when certain events occur, allowing the player to respond appropriately.

Alien worlds have many challenges. You can't babysit your whole squad all the time; marines have their own personalities and will react without orders if needed.



As Squad Leader, keep tabs on the vital signs of all your marines.

Your squad infiltrates a warehouse. It seems safe for now, but attack could come at any moment. When it does, stop the action long enough to give orders.



Build your own maps with ease; Breach 3 will round the edges for you.

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A Masterful Blend of Subtle Strategy and Wickedly Ruthless Action!

KILLER GRAPHICS. OUTRAGEOUS ANIMATION. SIZZLING SOUNDS.

That's DARK LEGIONS™ from SSI. It's got the maneuvering, trickery, and deception of the best strategy games. Plus blazing combat so realistic it rivals the hottest arcade mega-hits!

Create an army of up to 50 beings from the realm of dark fantasy. Choose from 16 different characters, such as the six we took right from the game to show you here! Each character comes with unique powers and abilities. Then, let the mayhem begin! Your goal: seek out and destroy the opposing legion's master — *and wrest ultimate power for yourself!*

Troll

Orc

Demon

For 1 or 2 players, DARK LEGIONS boasts modem play. Sophisticated artificial intelligence. Pre-set scenarios with variable difficulty settings. And a wide range of set-up choices to make every game different and playing time limitless!

Think you can cut it? You'll need brains *and* brawn to survive in this alternate dimension, where hidden traps and lurking creatures make every move unpredictable and hazardous!

Wraith

Wizard

Conjurer

DARK LEGIONS.
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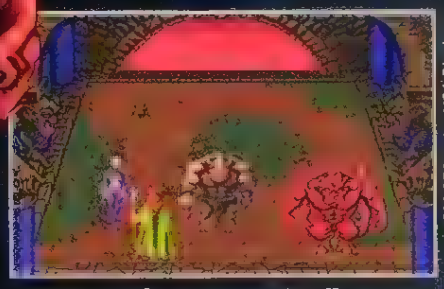
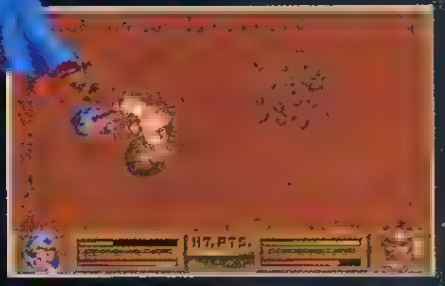


IBM 256-color VGA Displays

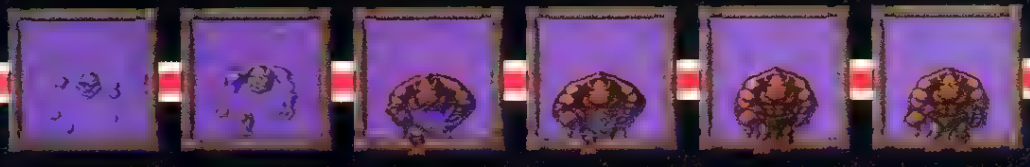
A Templar faces three deadly opponents on the main strategy screen.

Scratch one Troll – it's about to be roasted by a Fire Elemental!



Stay away from a Troll's huge club! This Wizard's learning the hard way.

Available for IBM & Compatibles on 3.5" disks and CD-ROM.



SSI

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Developed by Silicon Knights.

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT BY DOMARK

DEVELOPED BY:
DOMARK

REQUIREMENTS:
386-33, DOS 5, 2MB RAM, VGA

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER, ROLAND, PC BEEPER

THEME:
ROLE-PLAYING

PRICE:
N/A

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING '94

GAME SUMMARY

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME, LORDS OF MIDNIGHT IS THE STORY OF PRINCE MORKIN OF THE LAND OF MIDNIGHT. LUXOR, HIS FATHER, HAS BEEN CAPTURED BY BOROTH THE WOLFHEART, AND IMPRISONED IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE BLACK CITADEL. YOUR QUEST IS TO RECRUIT A BAND OF KNIGHTS ERRANT, TRAVEL ACROSS THE LAND, AND RESCUE HIM. FAIL, AND THE LAND FALLS TO BOROTH AND HIS MINIONS. AN ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT GAME ENGINE ALLOWS YOU TO CONTROL ANY OR ALL OF THE CHARACTERS INDEPENDENTLY; IF YOU FEEL LIKE TAKING CHARGE OF ONLY ONE, THE COMPUTER WILL TAKE CHARGE OF THE OTHERS, GIVING THEM LIFE-LIKE INTELLIGENCE AND ACTIONS. THEY WILL VENTURE OUT ON QUESTS OF THEIR OWN AND WILL FIGHT INDEPENDENTLY IN BATTLE.

Select different members of your party to accomplish different tasks.

DOMARK PRODUCES A ROLE-PLAYING GAME WITH BRAINS.

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT IS A DISTINCT DEPARTURE FROM WHAT MOST PLAYERS ASSOCIATE WITH ROLE-PLAYING GAMES.

Domark brings out its new role-playing game this Spring, Lords of Midnight. Unusual in its look and feel, it has an artificial intelligence engine that will allow your players to operate independently of each other. What this means is that, if you feel like controlling only one character, the computer will take charge of the other three characters and have them go on quests of their own. You merely have to call them back into the fold in order to reunite the party.

Known mainly for its excellent flight simulators, Domark is taking a big risk by exploring the RPG market. Yet, based on what we've seen (at CES–Las Vegas and elsewhere), this promises to be a quite refreshing departure from standard RPG fare. The terrain is fractally generated and texture-mapped; it is fully 3-D scrollable. You can control any of the main characters individually while the computer handles the others. If you decide to control all party members through a party leader, they form a duckwalk line, but independent control is a just a mouse-click away. Battles can be fought entirely from the first-person perspective, or you can conjoin your enemy from the three-quarter party perspective.

Travel through the land is done through a number of means. You can travel by foot, horse or boat, and, later in the game, by flying dragon. Getting from one place to another is easy as well; you can simply call up a map of the land and click on any of the locations listed. Venues in the game are both indoor and outdoor. An on-line help almanac will get the novice player started on his adventure, or direct the more experienced player in the proper use of the controls.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST MAINTAINS ITS APPEAL.

DISNEY SOFTWARE'S LATEST CHILDREN'S GAME IS MAGICAL FUN FOR THE KID IN ALL OF US.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST BY DISNEY SOFTWARE

DEVELOPED BY:
DISNEY SOFTWARE

REQUIREMENTS:
2 MB RAM, 386/33 MHZ

SOUND SUPPORT:
MOST MAJOR SOUND CARDS

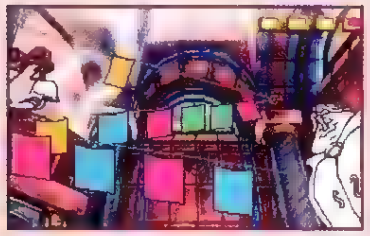
THEME:
CHILDREN'S GAME

PRICE:
N/A

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING '94

GAME SUMMARY

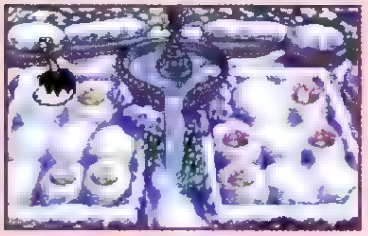
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST IS A LOGIC PUZZLER FOR KIDS, BUT IT HOLDS AN APPEAL FOR ADULTS AS WELL. YOU ARE PRESENTED WITH A SERIES OF PUZZLES, EACH NARRATED AND HOSTED BY A CHARACTER FROM THE MOVIE (LUMIERE THE CANDELABRA, CHIP THE TEACUP, COGSWORTH THE CLOCK, ETC.). IF YOU COMPLETE ALL OF THE INDIVIDUAL PUZZLES, YOU ARE REWARDED WITH THE TEN-MINUTE BALLROOM SEQUENCE FROM THE MOVIE, SOUND AND ALL.



Teaching kids color-recognition is the aim of this puzzle.

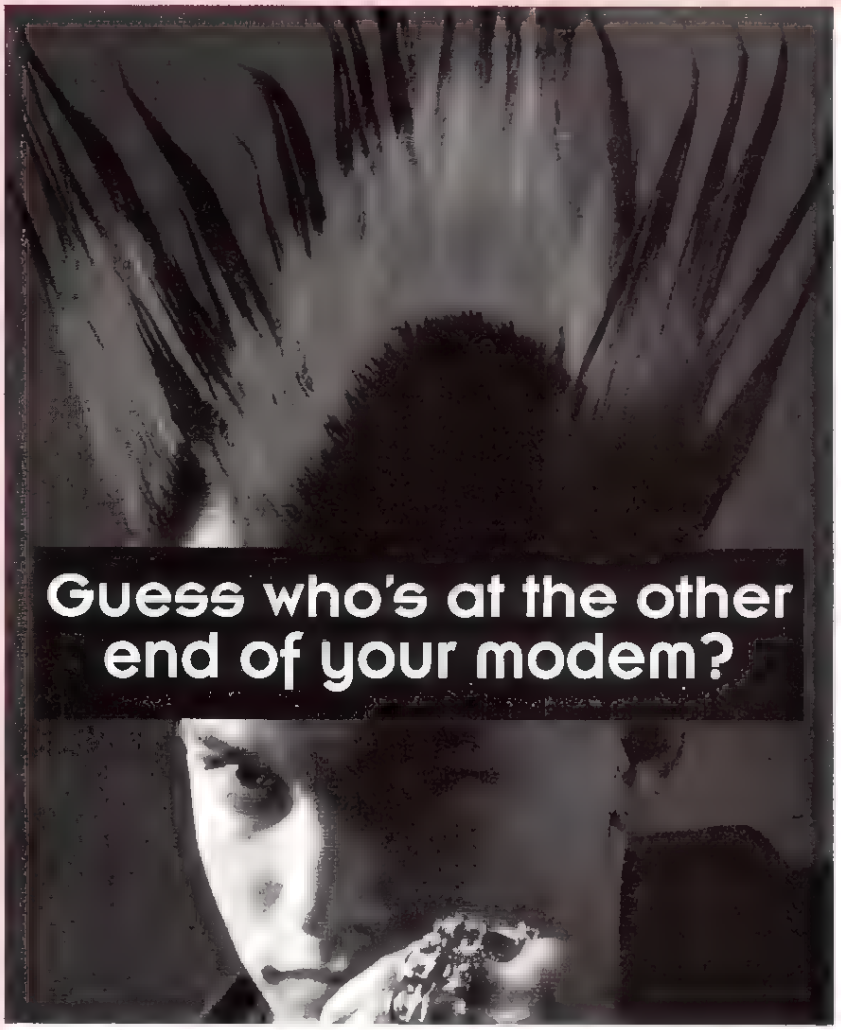
Disney Software is developing a game that all three editors here are itching to get their fingers on. Beauty and the Beast may be a children's game, but the game's payoff of a ten-minute clip of the ballroom scene (complete video motion, sound and music) is well worth the admission price. Expect to have your kids begging for it as soon as it hits your software seller's shelves. From what we saw at CES, this game deserves every last penny it will make. Animated characters from the movie guide you (with full voices, to boot) through each of the puzzles.

Friendly Cogsworth guides your child through a pattern-recognition game.



The garden puzzle will help develop memorization skills.

Beauty and the Beast, all characters, names and indicia are trademarks of the Walt Disney Company © 1994



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DEVELOPED BY:
SIERRA ON-LINE

REQUIREMENTS:
386/25 OR FASTER
WINDOWS 3.1 OR HIGHER
MOUSE, VGA
HARD DRIVE

SOUND SUPPORT:
MOST MAJOR
SOUND CARDS

THEME:
STRATEGY/SIMULATION

PRICE:
$69.95

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING '94

GAME SUMMARY

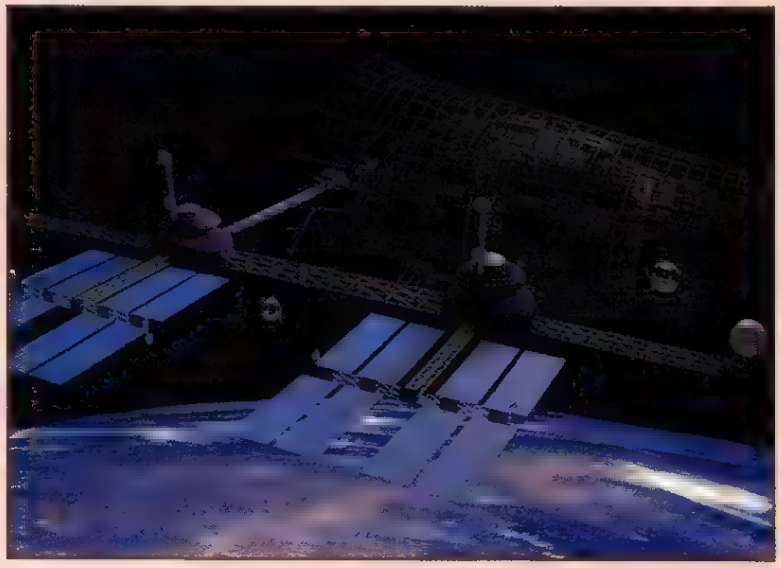
BUILD A THRIVING COLONY ON A BARREN PLANET FAR FROM THE DESTROYED REMAINS OF EARTH. AFTER FINDING A SUITABLE WORLD USING PROBES, SETTLE IN TO YOUR NEW HOME. USING ADVANCED ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY, CONSTRUCT LIVING QUARTERS, LABORATORIES, MINES, FACTORIES, FARMS AND MORE. EXPAND YOUR BASE OF OPERATIONS BOTH ABOVE GROUND AND BELOW. FACE ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS LIKE METEOR SHOWERS AND BLISTERING TEMPERATURES AS WELL AS LOGISTICAL, POLITICAL AND SURVIVAL PROBLEMS. DEAL WITH THE DEMANDS OF REBEL COLONIES BY TRADE OR COMPETITION. EVERY DAY YOU SURVIVE IS A NEW VICTORY.

COMMAND ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HUMANITY ON A HOSTILE WORLD.

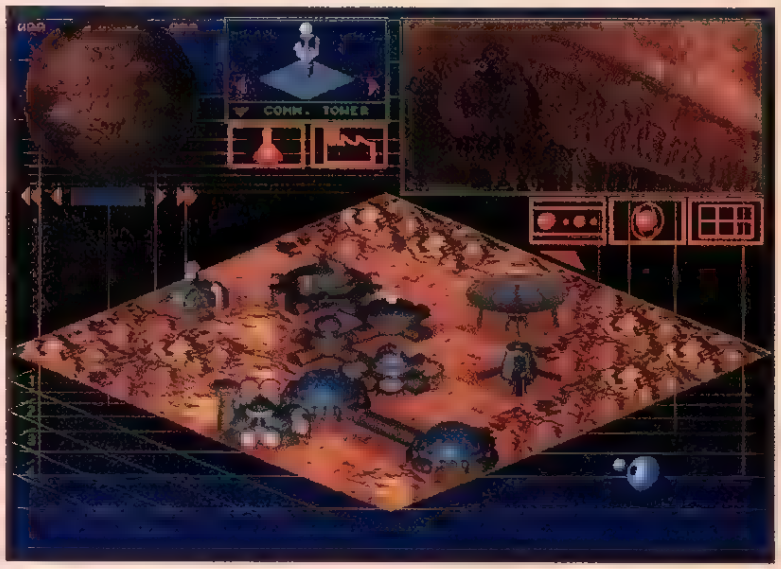
YOUR COLONY IS THE LAST HOPE OF OUR SPECIES. CAN YOU SURVIVE THE DANGERS OF A BARREN WORLD AND RESTORE HOPE?

Fifty years from now, Earth has been destroyed in an accident. You're in command of the only band of survivors, housed in a colony ship equipped with the latest technology. You are humanity's only hope to survive. Launch probes and select a suitable new home. But this is just the beginning of your trials.

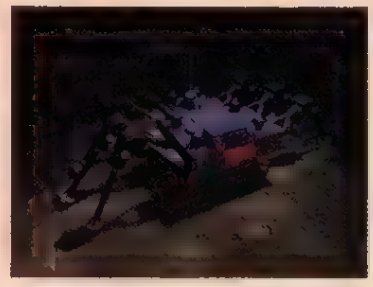
Your new home is nothing like Earth. Hostile surface conditions like windstorms, vacuum worlds and meteor strikes will challenge you. Send automated mining robots to strip resources while others construct your new home, which will probably have to be mostly underground. You'll compete with rebel colonies for precious food, water and air. Technology marches on as you build research laboratories to improve your standard of living. Survival is the only success.



The ship that will bear you away from the destruction of the earth sits majestically in drydock, still attached to the orbital platform that it was built on.



View your new home from the luxury of command. Note the positions of your holdings on the new planet as well as an overview of the nearby area.



HELP BURY THE IJN UNDER AN ONSLAUGHT OF NAVAL FIREPOWER.

GNB2: GUADALCANAL MAY HELP SSI TO DOMINATE THE WAR-TORN LANDSCAPE OF MILITARY SIMULATION SOFTWARE.

GREAT NAVAL BATTLES, VOLUME II: GUADALCANAL 1942-1943 BY SSI

DEVELOPED BY: SSI

REQUIREMENTS: 386-33, 4 MB RAM, DOS 5.0

SOUND SUPPORT: SOUND BLASTER, ADLIB, ROLAND, GENERAL MIDI

THEME: MILITARY SIMULATION

PRICE: N/A

RELEASE DATE: SPRING '94

GAME SUMMARY

SECOND IN A SERIES, GREAT NAVAL BATTLES 2 SENDS YOU TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC FOR THE MONUMENTAL CONFLICT THAT ROCKED GUADALCANAL AND THE REMOTE ISLANDS SURROUNDING IT. FIVE TACTICAL BATTLES, TWO CARRIER BATTLES AND TWO FULL CAMPAIGNS PROVIDE LIMITLESS HOURS OF CUTTING-EDGE WORLD WAR II NAVAL COMBAT SIMULATION. ALL IN SPECTACULAR, CRISPLY DETAILED SUPER-VGA. BUILD YOUR FORCES FROM ONE HUNDRED SHIP TYPES AND TWENTY PLANE TYPES AS YOU ENGAGE ENEMY FORCES ON LAND, AT SEA, AND IN THE AIR. SOPHISTICATED COMMAND AND CONTROL FEATURES ALLOW THE COMPUTER TO SWEAT THE DETAILS WHILE YOU MAKE THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS.

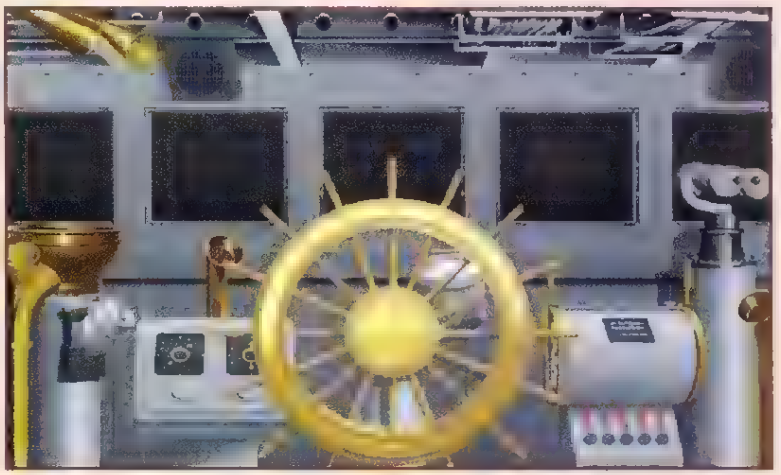
Actual WW2 photos are digitized for the SVGA backgrounds.

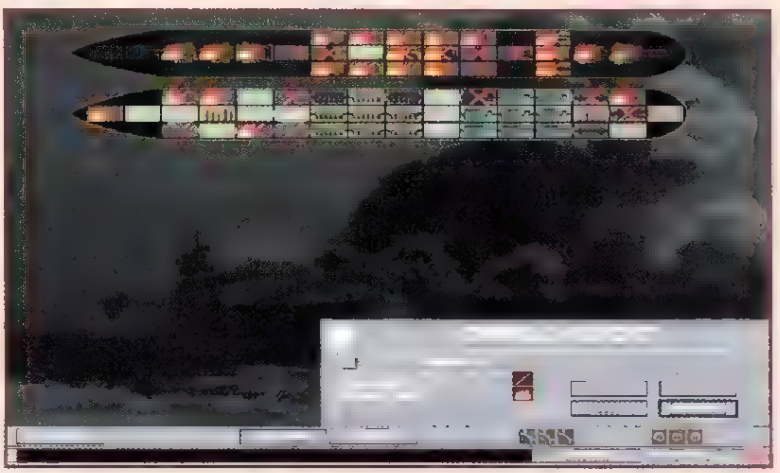
Volume II in SSI's Advanced Simulator Series, Great Naval Battles 2: Guadalcanal 1942-1943 is the harbinger of doom for many lesser military simulators. It features SVGA graphics, an all-new mouse controlled interface, and actual digitized World War II photos for backgrounds. There's also a special VCR function that lets you record and play back your battles—to wallow in your defeat or to savor your victory.

Many scenarios are built into the game. Five of them are simple (or, maybe not-so-simple) tactical battles, three are carrier battles. Go for the glory by playing either of the two full-scale campaigns. For any of these you can build your forces from a collection of one hundred ships and twenty aircraft, or play them with historical accuracy, using the weapons that were actually on hand. Computer control can assume responsibility for the details of the game while you make the command decisions, or you can micro-manage every aspect of a battle—right down to the targeting of individual guns.

A background photo of an Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carrier.

A deadly Douglas Corsair is readied on deck in this background.





DARK LEGIONS BY SSI

DEVELOPED BY:
SSI

REQUIREMENTS:
VGA, 4 MEG RAM
HARD DRIVE

SOUND SUPPORT:
SOUND BLASTER
AND COMPATIBLES

THEME:
ACTION/STRATEGY

PRICE:
$70.00

RELEASE DATE:
SPRING '94

GAME SUMMARY

BUILD A FANTASY ARMY AND DEFEAT YOUR CHALLENGER USING A COMBINATION OF ARCADE ACTION AND STRATEGY.

Battles are savage affairs as each creature uses its own special powers.

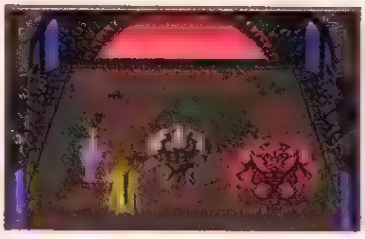
WIELD AWESOME CREATURES IN A BATTLE FOR SUPREME POWER.

CREATE THE ULTIMATE FANTASY ARMY OUT OF STYGIAN FORCES IN A WAR WHERE BRAINS AND BRAWN ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR VICTORY.

The Time of War has come to the plains of Tahr Carog. Mighty beings form themselves into War Bands and battle for ultimate power. When the smoke of war have finally blown away, only one War Band will stand.

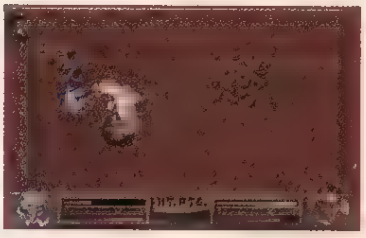
Dark Legions will be a game of both action and strategy. You'll need the guile, deception and trickery of a master strategist, combined with the razor reflexes of an arcade maven.

War Bands can contain up to 50 creatures. Build them using a flexible point system that gives you full choice of which and how many of the 16 dark fantasy beings you wish to use. Wizards, Demons, Orcs and Illusionists, are just a few examples, and each has its own abilities.



Create an army of up to 50 beings chosen from 16 dark fantasy creatures.

Dark Legions will also feature network and modem play for two players. Pre-set scenarios with variable difficulty selections will allow players of all skill levels to compete effectively. Of course, the wide variety of set-up choices will ensure that every game is different. Players will be able to create deadly traps on the battlefield as well as equip beings with magical rings to enhance or change abilities.



A mighty Troll lands yet another Spiked Club blow on the head of a Wizard.

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WANTED: U-BOAT COMMANDER If you've always dreamed of spending months at sea in the claustrophobic confines of a WWII submarine, this is for you. Bring along a good book to while away the off watch hours. Bring also the nerve to withstand incessant barrages of depth charges rattling your teeth at 200 meters. Bring the intelligence not to venture a surface shot on a capitol ship in broad daylight. Bring the skill to navigate treacherous waters. Bring patience. Bring perseverance. Most of all bring a sense of fun. After all, it's a game. For the Mac at your software retailer or call 516-433-9800. VISA/MC.

DEADLY GAMES™

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND ONE DYNASTY KIT: JUST ADD MONGOLS.

HOW TO CONQUER YOUR ENEMIES, FORGE ALLIANCES, RULE THE WORLD AND FATHER A DYNASTY IN KOEI'S GENGHIS KHAN II.

TECH SPECS

Requirements:
640K, VGA, Hard Drive

Sound Support:
Sound Blaster and compatibles

Controller:
Keyboard, Mouse

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Designed by:
Koei

Distributed by:
Koei

GAME SUMMARY

Conquer Eurasia with Mongol hordes by using military, political and economic power wisely and well. Three scenarios plus a hidden scenario are included with the game.

So ya wanna rule the world. That's okay; plenty of people do. But if you don't want to rush off and get yourself killed like most people do, there's a few lessons you'll need to learn first about the world and workings of Genghis Khan II.

GK2 contains three scenarios, plus the hidden fourth scenario. Three of these four take place on the full world map, so that's where much of this discussion will take place. Most of the examples and instructions will pertain to the second of the scenarios (Genghis Khan's Grand Ambition); if you're good enough to see the hidden fourth scenario, you don't need this guide.

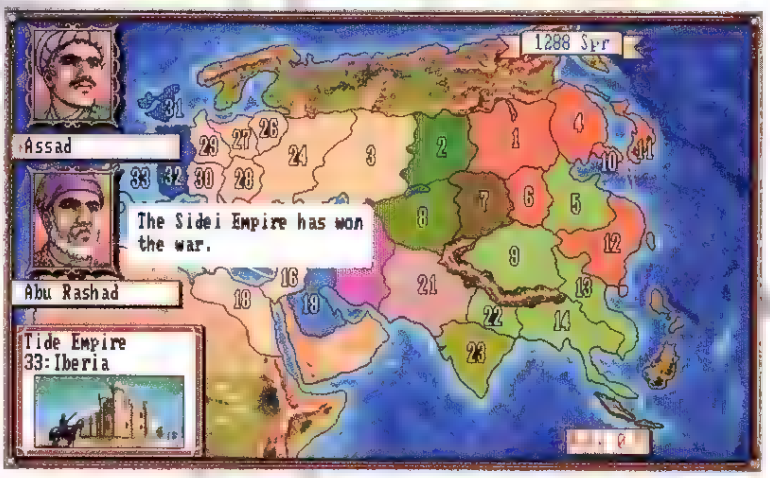
Early in the game, many small (3-5) province empires will form.

EMPIRES

To decide which empire to play, you'll need to carefully examine the features (and therefore futures) of that starting position. For example, look at the starting positions of Scenario 2:

- **Mongol**- Very strong militarily, but in trouble geographically. Plenty of strong generals (two with 'A' war ratings!), and a dynasty line already established.
- **Kamakura**- Reasonably strong militarily, excellent geographical position. The generals are all old, but the ruler is young. Good for the beginner.
- **Khorezm**- Fair military, fair geographical positioning. Good family setup, however.
- **Ghore**- Poor military, fair geographical positioning. The high point is the ownership of two provinces at the beginning.
- **Angevin**- Fair military, excellent geographical positioning. Only one province can attack England, making the border very easy to seal.
- **Capetian**- Fair military, good positioning. One step away from taking England as an unassailable home base.

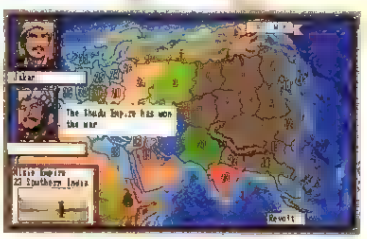
So which one to choose? For the inexperienced, the defensive opportunities available to the Angevin and Kamakura make these the best choices. The adventurous could choose the Capetian and Khorezm, as these are in close proximity to safe areas. Only the skilled or foolish should attempt the conquest as the Mongols, as this empire must have a strong hand at the helm to drive it towards a safe area without losing the initiative.



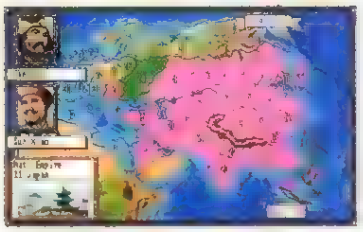
The middle portion of the game is a race as the various small empires clash back and forth. Maintain a low profile here, letting others exhaust themselves first.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the surest way of eventually defeating the computer opponents. The computer is very skilled at judging when to attack, and very poor at judging where to attack. This weakness



When one empire has taken over a half of the map, start moving slowly.



Notice how the blue western empire slowly encroaches eastward.

can easily be exploited

Your main purpose in building an empire is creating safe zones, areas that are immune to attack from enemy states. Careful study of the map will reveal these places. You must strive to create an unassailable base through geography and diplomacy, behind which you can safely build up huge armies.

For example, England is the perfect supply base, since it can only be attacked from one other province. Japan is vulnerable to only two lines of attack, as is India. Strive to use areas like this as your home base.

When deciding whom to attack, keep these geographical features in mind. In Europe, apply forces to the West edges first, since North African provinces often have only one enemy. In Asia, ignore the Mongolian areas and concentrate your forces southward, along the Pacific Rim, where much the same is true. Before deciding on an attack strategy, analyze the number of borders that a successful attack would either open or close. Keep striving to reduce that number; it'll keep you from being overwhelmed.

Diplomacy

Ignore the advice of your advisors on this one; if another empire offers you an alliance, accept it. Do not accept it only if:

- It's a province that has just rebelled from you. Smash the suckers hard; giving them an alliance will only give them time to build
- It's a province that is either in a safe area, or between you and a safe area. Crush them quickly; don't give them time to build.
- You're about to attack it, or it's seriously weaker than you and could easily be attacked.

Send diplomatic parties rarely; when you do send one, send it to a reasonably powerful neighbor who is near another reasonably large power. Allying with them allows them to concentrate their forces on the enemy. In a few years you can sweep in and pick up the pieces.

Policies

Set your behind-the-scenes safe areas to Economic priorities, while demanding Military economies out of all your border states. However, if an area is showing a tendency to rebel, set the policy to a Domestic one to keep the people happy.

When setting labor policies, lean heavily on the creation of marketable items as well as farming. This keeps the people happy (food) and the economy strong (money), as long as the market rate is good and merchants can be found.

In general, let your advisors do the work. They'll increase your economy and domestic worth without your micromanagement. Only step in to sell huge amounts of goods, or make crucial changes. Other than that, leave well enough alone.

War

Now we come to the meat of the matter. Empires only happen one way, and that's by conquest. How best to approach the utter subjugation of other humans?

The choice of Quality versus Quantity of military units is a delicate one. Ideally, you'll have both. Unfortunately, you'll rarely have this luxury.

The question is further complicated by the effects of skilled generals, training, morale and armament. All these factors make accurate judgement of military potential difficult.

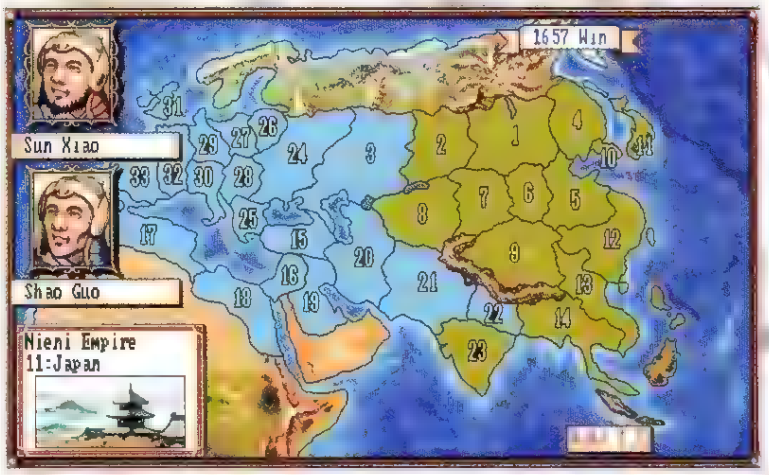
When building a good military, however, your most immediate concern is likely to be money. Lack of money equals poor troops. An excess of money means good troops. Your best bet, therefore (and obviously), is to have as much money available as possible.

Failing that, try to maintain high factors in the other categories. Train the troops whenever possible. Buy them arms (especially if your troops are heavily missile-armed). Hire and keep good generals.

Trust the AI of your advisor when building armies. He'll train them, arm them and hire more when there's enough money to do so. Just set the policy to whatever needs you have.

The AI of your subordinate governors can also generally be trusted. If they have enough troops, they'll attack the enemy. Just watch out for their loyalty. Also, they'll spread excesses of troops around evenly.

The final rule of warfare in GK2 is one that the computer players will rigidly adhere to: don't pick a fight you don't think you'll win. Carefully consider the consequences of weakening yourself before attacking.



Slow and steady wins the race. As long as blue can maintain the initiative (being careful of rebellion and disloyal underlings), world dominance is his.

Patience

The best skill to have during the game is patience. State policies simply must take months if not years to have real effects. Until you rid yourself of the obsessive need to do something every turn, you'll fade into history time and time again beneath the boots of conquerors who were patient. Creating a continental dynasty takes plenty of time, and often a couple of generations. As a rule, install a good advisor and allow him to rule the kingdom three turns out of every four. In times of crisis, of course, take a bigger hand.

Mongol Family Values

Don't neglect your relatives. Every time you actually issue orders, try to set aside some time to spend with family. This is hardly a luxury; it has three serious effects. First, it ensures that you have heirs, thus ensuring that you can continue the game. Secondly, your wife will often tip you to the crumbling loyalty of generals under your command. Finally, even after you have several children, spending time with them increases their nascent abilities, making sure that your heirs are worth something.

WARFARE

Combat in the thirteenth century was nasty, brutish and short. Your strategies for guiding your warriors in battle should recognize this fact. Before discussing specialized tactics for different situations, remind yourself of the role of finesse in these conflicts: none. There is no room for a careful plan and centralized command. Classic formations and concepts (like infantry-centered ranks with missile reserves and cavalry sweepers) are nearly useless here–you'll have neither the time nor the room to maneuver on such a specific level. Combat must be brutally direct to be effective.

This does not, however, mean that you should delegate your commands in every battle and let the computer flail blindly after the enemy. Rather, you should capitalize on this directness and lever the conflict forcefully in your favor by understanding the two fundamentals behind warfare in GK2.

MOBILITY

The mobility of your units is the single most important deciding factor of a battle. Mobility in this sense refers not only to the unit's mobility factor according to the game, but also the unit's size and ease of use.

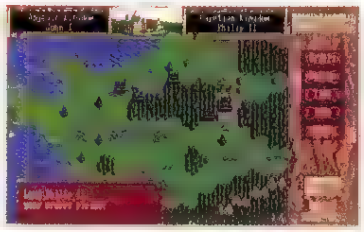
Smaller (wounded) units are paradoxically more useful in combat, due to their smaller size. Full-sized units are prisoners of the terrain, and can often be paralyzed by lack of maneuvering room. A half-strength unit can often flank an enemy effectively. Do not, however, allow these smaller units to enter combat unsupported, since they will be quickly overwhelmed.

The game's traditional mobility also controls the number of attacks that a unit can make, which is obviously a crucial factor; this is more important than the ability to move distances, since the battles occur at such short range and with little room to maneuver. A Mongol unit can usually attack twice as often as an infantry unit, which is far more important than its ability to outrun it.

Victory in combat requires that your units be kept in positions that maximize their mobility. Force the enemy to come to you if possible, eating up his mobility. Leave an escape hole for your badly wounded units to retreat through. Above all else, don't block fresh units away from the enemy.

Finally, maintain a reserve unit if possible behind the other units. Use its excess mobility to keep front-line units out of disarray; there's no need for the saving unit to be anywhere near the confused unit.

The classic battle outside the castle gates. Note the defender's use of contact points not only to block the castle off, but also to double-team an attacking unit.



The Angevins march in. Use the abundant woods to ambush often.

CONTACT

Hand in hand with the concept of mobility must come the realization that broadside contact with the enemy is not necessary for effective combat. In fact, given the often claustrophobic terrain of the battlefield, this realization can increase your combat success rate immeasurably.

When fighting defensively, let the enemy come to you. Form a box with your troops so that the enemy's front rank will come into contact with two or three of your troop's ranks. Properly applied, this defense will shred incoming troops unit by unit, denying the enemy any attempt to exploit numerical supremacy.

On the offense, maneuver your troops to avoid just such a trap. Meanwhile, try to apply the same principles in your favor. The computer will often ignore routes of retreat for wounded units, so it is often possible to pin a wounded unit against a wall or friendly unit and finish it off. Whenever possible, try to contact as few of the enemy as possible with as many of your units as possible.

Missile weapons ignore most of the principles of contact, but are unlikely to alter the balance of the battle due to their limited number of shots. Even dedicated missile units like Horse Archers and Longbows are difficult to position effectively due to mobility problems, and will often run out of missiles before more than one unit can be badly damaged by them. Use missiles as an approach tactic, but don't rely on them. ***-Kevin Perry***

CHARGING

Never order your troops to Charge unless the enemy is in disarray. Charging against a strong enemy (especially with weakly charging troops such as bowmen) risks disarray for your own troops. Charging is a powerful follow-through for a strong attack, not a desperation move for the weak.

SAVE THOSE VETERANS!

If at all possible, save the last square (50 or so men) of a unit. Its size and therefore maneuverability make it easy to shield. No matter what the temptation, do not hurl this lame unit against a strong enemy; assuming you win the war, or at least successfully retreat, the unit will become whole again over the ensuing turn. This saves your nation the resources that would be spent not only on recruiting but also on training.

PERSONAL COMMAND

Don't take command of a unit unless your presence will be necessary and sufficient to swing the battle. The chance of injury and death is otherwise too great, especially if the unit is subject to enemy missile fire.

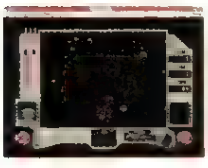
You're tense!
You're stressed! You need a release!
You need to blow something up!
You need...

ACTION PAQ!

Enemy robot soldiers...POW! Sub-space vortices...BAM! BLOOSH. Look out for that mutant rock monster! Hover Bot...lookout...KABAAM! Now, don't you feel better?

Introducing the ***Fast Action Paq: The First Challenge***, a new collection of arcade games for Windows ® by ***Quackers*** ™ from Mallard Software. These four games are filled with action, adventure and suspense, just the thing for taking out your anxieties at home or at the office.

Easy to install and easy to play, these games are compatible with just about any PC running Windows. So you don't need monster power or elaborate do-dads hooked up to the whatchamacallit in the back of your computer. Just click open *BUBBLE TROUBLE* and begin blasting a clear path through space for your starship or *MOLE'S QUEST* to jump and scurry to a new home by following a series of tunnels and mine shafts while avoiding vicious miners, radioactive walls and mutant subterranean creatures.



In FLAK ATTACK you're the last hope for mankind as you try to blow parachuting robotic storm troopers out of the skies while in BOT it's up to you to infiltrate a killer robot factory and stop the 'Mother' computer from producing any more.

So if you're looking for a break in your everyday action or just something to blast into a million tiny bits, get ***Fast Action Paq: The First Challenge*** from ***Quackers***. You'll feel better for it.

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OPEN TORPEDO DOORS. . .TUBES READY TO FIRE!

ONLY THOSE WITH THE HEART OF A THIEF AND A TASTE FOR EXCITEMENT CAN WITHSTAND THE RIGORS OF COMMANDING A U-BOAT.

TECH SPECS

Requirements: 640X480 color/gray monitor, 4MB RAM

Sound Support: N/A

Controller: Mouse

Available for: Macintosh

Designed by: Rene Vidmer

Distributed by: Deadly Games

GAME SUMMARY

Explore the world of the submarine captain in World War II. Sneak up on countless tons of British shipping and send it to the bottom with a well-placed Eel torpedo. Avoid depth charges, get medals and use your periscope.

The following material regarding U-Boat may not apply to every game. Since conditions change and random encounters do occur, the following several pages should be viewed as merely a possibility of what can happen, and in this case, did happen.

FROM THE LOGBOOK OF THE CAPTAIN OF U-122

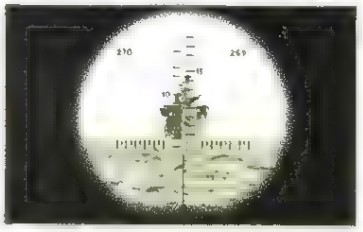
We left the port of Kiel on the last day of April, 1940. Our first patrol was to be just a training exercise: learning the idiosyncrasies of our new U-122 and figuring out the tricky navigation around the coastal waters of northern Germany and Denmark. We were commanded to first patrol sector AO18. Rather than try to sail through the tricky waters between Denmark and the island of Fyn, we headed east, sailing very close to the coast of Sjaelland towards the northern tip of Denmark. At about 18:00, we were radioed by command that a tanker was sailing off the Swedish coast at 7 kph. We were given permission to attack.

We plotted an intercept course for the tanker. As soon as it was spotted on the horizon, we dove to periscope depth and proceeded at flank speed. When the ship was within several thousand meters, we fired two torpedoes, and moments later, had sent 17,200 tons of Allied shipping to a watery grave.

Plot your course and those of enemy ships in your chart room.

After scoring the kill, U-122 was told to sail to sector AN65 on the other side of Denmark. En route we gave chase to a British cargo ship, but since it was during daylight hours of May 2, we were quickly spotted and outstripped. Disgruntled, we continued to our patrol destination and were promptly ordered to sector AN82, located between the West Frisian Islands and Great Britain.

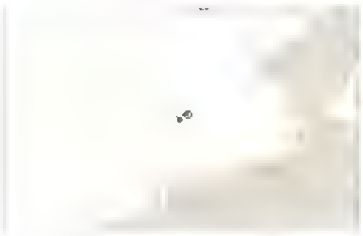
Our journey to AN82 was an eventful one. About halfway there, we encountered an Allied destroyer who immediately charged our position. I commanded our U-boat to dive to about 50 meters. In the chart room, I plotted the advance of the destroyer and had our torpedo room arm two of the forward tubes. When the destroyer was very close, we surfaced and fired quickly. The destroyer was hit hard in the bow and sunk, but not before we had taken damage to both our engine room and forward firing tubes. I considered limping home at this point, but the engineers had our systems back on line within 6 hours after we surfaced *(editor's note—this tactic is not recommended for attacking enemy warships.)*.



Normally, if they get this close to you, you're going to feed the sharks!

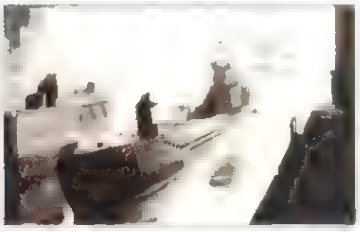
Shortly after the damage was repaired, I felt I had made a serious error in judgement. A battleship, apparently responding to the distress call from the recently dispatched destroyer, spotted us near midday and closed for the kill. In spite of the fact that U-boats were not made to take down such large ships, I fired four torpedoes, hoping for a lucky hit. Nothing did, so I commanded a dive to about 9 meters off the ocean floor. Moving at about 2 kph, we tried to go as quietly as possible so the battleship would have trouble finding us. To further confuse them, I changed course every few minutes so they could not plot our direction. The depth charge attack was fierce, but we eventually escaped. I didn't risk surfacing until 20:00 that night.

Early on the morning of the 3rd, we were alerted to another tanker sailing for the coast of England. We gave chase, but again, since we encountered the ship in daylight, were quickly outstripped. Our course was then set for sector AN29, which lies just to the west of the Norwegian coast.



Intercept courses allow you to strike at ships that are normally faster.

Again, we were alerted to an enemy ship, this time a tramp steamer headed for Bergen at 9 kph. Once he was spotted on our map, I saw that we had more than enough time to get to Bergen ahead of him, so I planned an ambush. U-122 sailed north until we were intersecting the steamers probable course. I then submerged and shut down the engines. Sure enough, the steamer came into view, and at around 22:00, took two torpedoes amidships. We surfaced and radioed in Command wanted us to sail to AN18, but as we were low on torpedoes, I ordered a course for Wilhelmshaven, which we reached without incident early on May 5



A successful first patrol concludes at Wilhelmshaven in northern Germany.

U-122 was refitted with torpedoes, refueled and the crew was given a well-deserved rest. We started back out on May 10 and were told to report to sector AN11, located just north of Scotland. Rather than sail around to the north of the Shetland Islands, which would allow better use of the deeper water, I resolved to go directly to our patrol point, since even at flank speed, it would take two days. The time passed uneventfully until we were between Scotland and the Orkney Islands. Command radioed us that a troop transport was headed towards Montreal from Denmark. Knowing that most troop ships are converted liners (and realizing that liners are at least 15,000 tons of shipping), we plotted a parallel course that would enable us to attack by nightfall on the 12th. We underestimated the liner's speed, however, and were forced to continue keeping pace, inching slowly northward as the liner slowed its pace to pass through the shallower water around the Faroe Islands. Finally, just before sunset on the 13th, I felt we had enough of a lead on the liner to intercept it's path off the eastern coast of Iceland sometime that night.

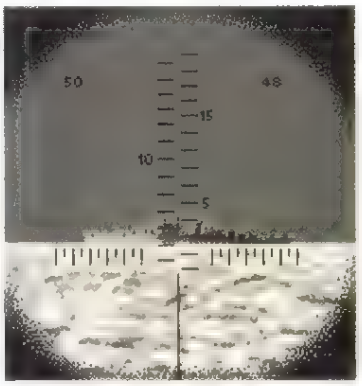
Our lookout spotted the ship around 22:00, and I took us down to periscope depth, plotting a course due north to cross the path of the liner. As it grew in my periscope, I ordered all four forward firing torpedoes armed, a switch from my normal tactic of firing just two. Since the liner was a bigger ship, I felt a spread of weapons might be more effective. I waited patiently until the liner grew fat in my sights, holding fire until it was about 2500 meters away and would thus have more trouble avoiding the missiles

Luck was with us that night, and three of the torpedoes scored, sending the ship to the bottom and more than doubling the tonnage sunk by the U-122

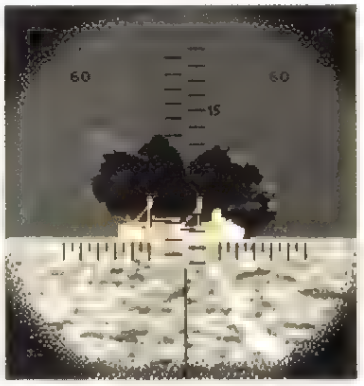
We headed for our next patrol point but were immediately set upon by an Allied cruiser that was apparently coming to the aid of the liner we had just destroyed. This cruiser and I played a very long, stressful game of cat-and-mouse. I fired a salvo quickly, and without waiting to see if anything hit, I submerged us to 150 meters. As far as I could tell, the cruiser still lurked above, waiting for us to surface and firing occasional depth charges. As with our earlier encounter with the battleship, I changed course frequently, trying each time to pull further away from the cruiser. I dared not go faster than 1/3 speed, both from the need to remain quiet and from the desire to conserve my battery as much as possible. At 1/3 power, we had the ability to stay underwater for close to three days, and as it turned out, it was a good thing I didn't waste the battery needlessly.

In addition to course changes, I had the luxury of working in very deep water, so I was also able to dive and surface slightly, making sure that the depth charge attack would at best be a lucky guess. After about 36 hours underwater and some very close explosions, the cruiser left. We took damage to the engine room and could only make half speed.

In spite of the fact that we still had over half our complement of torpedoes and all of our deck gun ammunition, I decided that the close call with the Allied cruiser would be a good reason to turn back to port. Rather than sail through English waters, I elected to take the ship through quadrant AM and BE. On the way, we were informed that French capitulation was close at hand and that several ports would soon be open in France Taking this opportunity, we decided that rather than sail all the way back to Wilhelmshaven, we would duck into either Brest or Lorient to refit and refuel our sub. Further adventures awaited us on the Atlantic waters.



Cruisers are easy to identify due to their distinctive profile.



A tanker usually can be taken out with one solid torpedo hit.

DEEP WATER IS YOUR FRIEND!

Whenever possible, sail in deeper water. While this is not feasible around much of the European coast, you will have plenty of opportunities to traverse parts of the ocean when it is much deeper than 70 meters. When the chance arises, take it. Diving down to 200 meters often means the difference between sailing away from an encounter with a battleship and winding up as flotsam.

TORPEDOES: USE SPARINGLY OR NOT AT ALL.

You come fully equipped with only 14 torpedoes, so do not use them indiscriminately. Many ships (cargo ships, tankers, tramps, PTs and destroyers) can be taken out with one or two hits. Firing two at a time instead of four at a time will help you conserve your precious ammo. It also has the added benefit of allowing you to follow a miss with another salvo immediately. Since it takes an hour to reload a tube, firing four without scoring a kill leaves you with virtually no recourse save your deck gun, which is more dangerous than fleeing when facing an enemy warship. Use sparingly!

KNOW YOUR TARGETS

YOU AND YOUR DECK GUN

Taking down a merchant ship or troop transport with your deck gun can be doubly rewarding. First of all, it is quite fun and second, it saves precious torpedoes for encounters further into your mission or emergencies.

When firing the deck gun, don't do so at a break-neck pace. After each shot, count to at least twenty before firing the next. This gives your gunners time to adjust for the next salvo, giving you a much better chance of hitting. Indiscriminate fire hits 20-30% of the time, while more careful fire often results in hits as often as 67% of the time! You only have 20 shells, so while you can be a little freer with the deck gun, being wasteful of your ammo can harm you down the line.

AVOIDANCE

Unless it is night and you have good position on the enemy, you are often better served by fleeing from an enemy warship than by attacking. Discretion *is* the better part of valor. Exceptions to this rule are PT boats, which can usually be taken, and battleships, which should be avoided unless otherwise commanded.

MERCHANT SHIPS

Your primary targets will be the merchant/troop ships of the enemy. These ships are generally unarmed and will flee if they spot you. Most require only one or two torpedo hits to sink.

TANKERS

With a displacement of 16,000 to 18,000 tons, a tanker is a sight that should make any U-boat captain smile. Generally, one solid hit with a torpedo will sink one. Easily identified from the side because of the long, flat deck, the tanker's top speed is only 20 kph. Should one try to escape, its slow top speed will keep it in range for some time.

TRAMP STEAMERS

The smallest and slowest of all merchant ships, the tramp steamer has a top speed of just 18 kph, 2 kph faster than your U-boat. Sinking a tramp will add 7,000 to 8,000 tons of shipping to your list of kills. One torpedo should take one down, as should several deck gun hits.

CARGO LINERS

Cargo liners have a top speed of 24 kph and weigh in between 10,000 and 12,000 tons. One or two torpedoes are necessary to bring one down. It is a good idea to sail closer to a cargo ship before attacking, for if your salvo misses, the cargo ship can quickly escape your range.

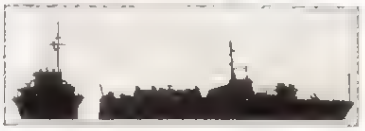
LINERS

Of all merchant shipping, nothing should make you more wary or more excited than a liner. Used mostly for troop transport, the liner weighs between 15,000 and 50,000 tons. Its top speed is the same as the cargo liner. Sneak close and use a wide spread of torpedoes to down one. Most liners you will encounter will have a tonnage of more than 25,000 tons. Do not squander your chances to sink one.

WARSHIPS

Always to be avoided during daylight hours, some warships can be safely attacked at night. Learn to identify them quickly.

PATROL BOATS



Small and fast, patrol boats weigh only 47 tons. Their top speed of 39 kph makes them difficult targets. One torpedo will sink them, but be careful. They do have enough firepower to sink you.

DESTROYERS

Bigger than PT boats, destroyers weigh between 1,500 and 1,900 tons and have a top speed of 36 kph. They are easily identified from the front by the twin projections on either side. You will encounter them quite often and you will find that they can be dogged in their perusal of your craft. One torpedo will sink them. A careful captain may find it possible to attack a destroyer in daylight hours if the situation permits.

CRUISERS

Cruisers are slightly slower, at 32 kph and slightly bigger, displacing 6,000 to 7,000 tons, than are destroyers. They are also more dangerous. Perhaps the easiest ship to identify from any angle, the cruiser can be positively identified by the high, sloping bow and the large gap between its twin structures. Several torpedoes are necessary to sink a cruiser. In daylight hours, they are best avoided, while at night they can be safely attacked. Should an attack fail, the U-boat captain would be wise to submerge and sail away quickly.

AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

Should you spot an aircraft carrier during the day, submerge, plot a course similar to its and wait until nightfall. The sinking of a carrier is an event that most U-boat captains dream of. Their top speed is 30 kph and they generally displace between 22,000 and 27,000 tons. The carrier's profiles are unmistakable and they have limited offensive capabilities, save the airplanes on-board. Do not pass up an opportunity to sink one.

BATTLESHIPS

Unless you have a latent death wish or are otherwise commanded, do not sail within the proximity of a battleship. Should one spot you, dive immediately to your maximum depth and either kill your engines or proceed at 1/3 speed, changing course frequently. Battleships move at 28 kph and weigh 32,000 to 38,000 tons. Don't let the prospect of sinking that much tonnage fool you. The battleship takes many torpedoes, and, as you wait for your tubes to reload, will more often than not destroy you. Avoid them at all possible costs, and you may survive to tell your grandchildren about what you did to help bring victory to the Reich.

While not everything that happened to the U-122 in its first two patrols will necessarily happen to everyone, there are particular lessons that can be learned from the tactics employed.

First, attacks should almost always be made at night. The main weapon of the submarine is not torpedoes but stealth. Virtually every ship on the water can quickly outstrip you or catch up to you. Even your slowest target, tramp steamers, have a top speed of 2 kph faster than yours.

In the day, you are much more easily spotted. Merchant vessels will flee while warships will close. Thus, in the day, it is much better to submerge and hope a ship doesn't see you than to attack. Often, by submerging to below periscope depth, arming torpedoes and then surfacing, you can surprise a merchant vessel and take it down.

Night covers your approach and your retreat. Use it

Also, unless ordered otherwise or returning to port, avoid coming within several kilometers of a coastline. You chance running aground and also run the risk of not being able to dive. Running aground is a lousy way to end a tour of duty.

Your U-boat has a much lower profile on the water than most ships. Thus, as soon as a ship is spotted on the horizon (not on your map), dive to periscope depth. If it is a ship that has just appeared without prior warning, it's best to submerge to the lowest extent of periscope depth (about 15 meters) in case you need to drop further down to escape, since in virtually every case, this will be a warship. Remember, wait until the ship is on the horizon! If you submerge when it is spotted on your map, you won't be able to catch up to it most of the time, and even if you do, you will more than likely be forced to surface before getting within attack range.

Whenever possible, set ambushes by sailing an intercept course well ahead of the enemy ship. Then, when you are right in a line with that ship, drop to 1/3 speed and turn so that the target will cross your path broadside. Dive and stop all engines. If it's day, pop your periscope up for a couple of seconds, then pull it down. Do this until the ship is within a comfortable range.

When on the surface, it behooves you to sail at flank speed. It gets you to your patrol point more quickly and gives you better opportunity for an ambush. While it is wasteful of fuel, it is possible to sail for a long time at flank speed. Even in that fuel-wasting mode, you can cover a lot of territory.

If you do find yourself very low on fuel and a very long way from port, remember that lower speeds equal better mileage. Your U-boat is capable of much greater distances at 2/3 or 1/3 speed than at full or flank. It will merely take you longer to get where you are going.

If things get really critical, you can submerge and travel that way. Since you use a diesel engine on the surface and a battery under water, you can move quite a good distance without spending a drop of your now precious diesel fuel. Keep an eye on your fuel gauge so that this problem doesn't occur. If you're down to 1/3 fuel, head for home.

Do not forget to use your attack computer, even if you already know the distance to your target. Use of this system will increase your accuracy and conserve torpedoes.

Your main display shows you everything except your current location.

Your "U-Boot Fahrer Handbuch" gives you front views and profiles of the ships you are likely to encounter in your travels. However, more often than not, you will not get a perfect profile or head-on view. Learn what the ships look like from all angles and learn to look for specific details to tell them apart. For instance, battleships have a massive superstructure with a smaller array behind it, both placed toward the aft of the ship. Cruisers have a large gap between their two structures, making them one of the more easily identified ship types

A little playing with your targeting computer will let you get a fix on how many divisions in your periscope a ship must be before it is within range. This does not mean, however, that you should not use the computer when targeting a ship. Correct use of the system (plotting the target's course, for instance), will ensure mush more accurate firing of the torpedoes. Without the computer, expect many of your shots to miss the mark.

If your four forward-firing torpedoes miss or fail to sink a target, turn 180°, arm and launch your rear-firing tube. It may not hit, but it's worth a shot if you think one more torpedo will earn you a kill.

Against merchant ships, attack from the upper reaches of periscope range. If your torpedoes miss, surface and use your deck gun. If a ship is within torpedo range, it is within gun range, and a fleeing ship is easier to hit with your gun than with another torpedo.

Finally, if a merchant ship sails out of range, turn away from it and sail at top speed. This will clear your horizon more quickly and will allow you to resume playing in a faster time compression. ***-Steve Honeywell***

Your Radio: Lifeline to Home

You can dramatically increase the number of ships you sink by radioing in with relative frequency. Your experiences will help you determine the best times to call in. Calling too frequently will cause you to be alerted to some potential targets that are in positions too far away to be caught. Ideally, you want enough advance notice on a given ship to get into good position without having to wait for more than a couple of hours. Radioing in every twelve hours (for example, at 6:00 and 18:00 every day) is a good idea.

Heading to Port

No matter how badly damaged your sub is and no matter how low on ammunition you are, you will continually be assigned to new sectors. Do not let this keep you from returning to port for whatever reason. High Command will understand your need for fuel or ammunition, and they do not expect you to remain at sea for the entirety of the war. Head for port when you need to or when intuition tells you your luck is running out.

CD-ROM: THE FINAL COMPUTER FRONTIER. . .

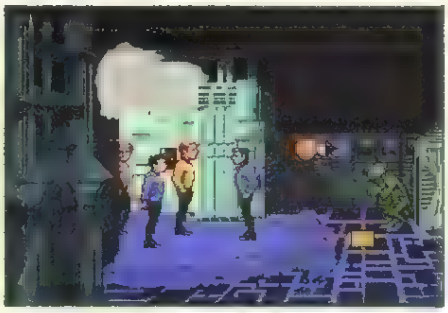
JOIN THE ORIGINAL CAST AND CREW OF THE STARSHIP ENTERPRISE ON A JOURNEY ACROSS THE GALAXY.

STAR TREK 25TH ANNIVERSARY BY INTERPLAY FOR PC CD-ROM

The floppy disk version has sold over 250,000 copies, so it is probably a good thing that this multimedia enhancement sticks fairly close to it. Some of the graphics, especially the bridge of the Enterprise and the outer space scenes, might've benefited from a little more work, but there is little in this game to ruffle the feathers of even a diehard trekker.

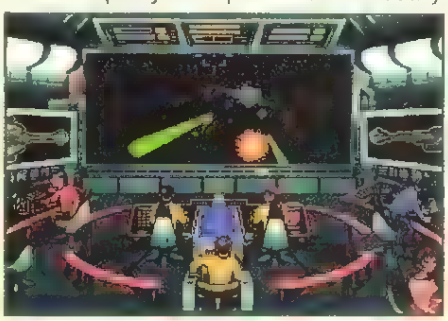
As Captain James T. Kirk, the gamer commands the bridge of the Enterprise and leads the away teams on missions to various planets. It is the mixture of these two types of game-play, space combat simulator and adventure, that gives Star Trek 25th Anniversary Enhanced CD-ROM much of its appeal. This is a varied and enjoyable game that does a good job of capturing the characters, settings, and situations that have made "Star Trek" virtually synonymous with science fiction for a generation of fans.

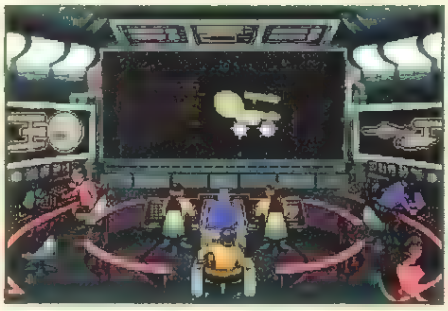
On the bridge, the point-and-click interface is a streamlined way for Kirk to issue orders to other crew members and supervise starship operations. Each officer has different functions. By clicking on a specific character, Kirk accesses that character's functions. Mr. Spock, for example, dispenses advice, analyzes the status of hostile vessels, and consults the ship's computer. Lt. Uhura, on the other hand, enables communication with other ships and planets.



As Captain James T. Kirk, you must use your fellow crew members to solve puzzles.

The gamer directly controls Kirk when a four-man landing party (Kirk, McCoy, Spock, and a Security Officer) transports to a planet. Point-and-click movement combined with a distinctive graphic Command Interface make it easy to control this party and perform necessary functions. The Command Interface is an alien figure. Commands like Talk are as easy to order as clicking on the figure's mouth. This intuitive style of play overcomes the slightly sketchy documentation; Star Trek 25th Anniversary is not particularly hard to learn. A true-to-the-license touch is that the game ends if Kirk, Spock, or McCoy die, but the loss of a security officer, though regrettable, doesn't ruin the chance of winning.





The adventure begins with a training battle against another federation starship.

Every frame of animated graphics shouts "Star Trek." These digitized images look like their video counterparts. You can hardly ask more than that. Praise is also due for the ship modeling.

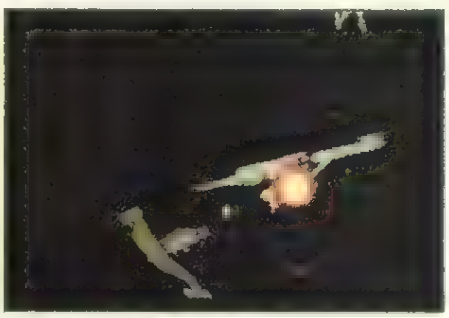
The program depicts the planetary landscapes in 256-color, VGA. A few other adventures have crisper scenery, but Art Director Todd J. Carnasta gets generally high marks for evoking that oh-so-familiar Trek look.

Sound is the game's most significant enhancement. More than 6,000 lines of spoken dialogue eliminate the need for those screen-hogging text windows. Players can choose to see text as well as hear spoken dialogue.

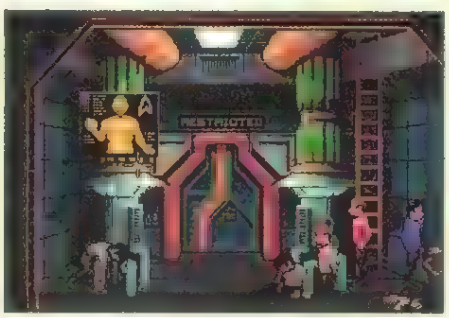
Star Trek 25th Anniversary Enhanced CD-ROM is gilded shovelware at its best. Embellished with strong audio and a revamped ending, it is a solid choice for multimedia sci-fi adventurers.

-Arnie Katz

First Officer Spock is always ready with some helpful advice.



Flying into the Neutral Zone, even inadvertently, can become quite hazardous.



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MULTIMEDIA AND MUSIC MELD ON CD-ROM. . .

PETER GABRIEL INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE HIS SECRET WORLD, COURTESY OF INTERPLAY.

Full-motion video clips of Peter's latest works are available on Xplora.

XPLORA 1: PETER GABRIEL
BY INTERPLAY
FOR MACINTOSH/PC CD-ROM

Is the secret world of Peter Gabriel more exciting than the secret life of plants? Some pop rock fanatics may think so. Others will prefer watching their lawn grow rather than getting involved with this interactive multimedia musical experience. While Xplora is undeniably imaginative and painstakingly polished to the max, the actual content may not thrill. Peter Gabriel has written many engaging tunes, but his creations seem to lack the power of the Bach-and-Beatles fare that has dominated interactive multimedia music until now.

The design/development team tried to give this interactive entertainment game elements with only partial success. Users have the option to collect items in a digital suitcase as they journey through Gabriel's multimedia universe. Most gamers will search for a complete set, if only out of sheer force of habit, and because items like passes allow entry to restricted areas. The essence of Xplora 1 is to simply wander, looking and listening as opportunities present themselves.

The main display presents two ways to enjoy Xplora 1, Interact and Watch. The former lets the computerist range freely through Peter Gabriel's Secret World, while the latter is a guided tour of the same territory.

Two other choices complete the menu in the lower left corner: Resume and Quit. They allow continuity over more than one session and exiting the program.

Try your hand at the mixing table, and see what kind of tunes you can create.

Control is through an intelligent cursor that changes form when it touches a hot spot. Several mechanisms make it easy to jump from screen to screen in this multimedia database. Color bars along the lower left edge of the screen return Xplora 1 to earlier menus. A row of icons in the upper right corner represents the sub-sections of the current section of the Secret World. Clicking on any of them takes you there.

The package includes a handsomely illustrated book about the whole Secret World experience. The actual documentation is very limited, with little detail about structure or control. This decision can be defended on the ground that it encourages free form experimentation. And that's the whole idea in the first place.

A visit to Real Studios, where Gabriel recorded *Us*, offers a chance to play instruments in a jam session and experiment with the studio's multi-track mix board.

Sound is the key to Xplora 1, though the amount and variety of graphics is impressive, too. The program makes lavish use of QuickTime movies for the singer's videos, the tour of Real Studios, and other appropriate sequences.

A digitized Peter Gabriel frequently pops up in a small window to comment on what's happening at that moment. He speaks very distinctly and naturally, and his insights into his Secret World do add to the presentation.

It's hard to do full justice to the graphics, assembled under the able direction of Michael Coulson. The technical quality is high, but there's also real artistic value. The subtle images are a far cry from usual game art, so don't expect comic book bombast.

Fans of Gabriel's music will find a feast here. Besides *Us*, with all tracks and lyrics, there is a section that contains a well-remembered song from each of his earlier albums.

There are two reasons to buy Xplora 1. It's a powerful demonstration of interactive multimedia, and it's a great activity program for Peter Gabriel fans.

-Arnie Katz

TRY TO WIN THE MOST EXCITING RACE OF ALL TIME.

INTERPLAY INVITES ALL COMERS TO RACE TO THE MOON IN AN INTERACTIVE AND HISTORICAL SPACE SIMULATOR.

Here's an overhead view of The Cape, where all the research and launching will take place.

BUZZ ALDRIN'S RACE INTO SPACE
BY INTERPLAY
FOR PC CD-ROM

For those of you old enough to have witnessed the mad scramble of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R to be the first to put a man on the moon, Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space might hold some nostalgic value. Others may have only dreamed of being an astronaut either as a child or as an adult. Though few have ever had the opportunity to feel a towering rocket filled to the brim with highly volatile fuel strapped beneath them, many of us have dared to dream, but probably would never dare.

BARIS lets you relive or experience for the first time this historical space race using the digital technology of the CD-ROM. The CD version includes many actual video shots and sounds from that era. You are assigned the strenuous duties as Director of the space programs of either the U.S. or the Soviets. Each side is given a turn of one season (two per year) to get to the moon. A budget each winter is allocated according to last year's successes or failures. As director there are many decisions to be made, and the lives of the astronauts or cosmonauts (or at the very least your job!) are in your hands.

At the beginning you are announced as director of the program on TV by Carter Walcrite in the U.S. and Svetlana Izvestia in Russia who will also update the news at the beginning of each season. The initial budget for both sides is 60 MB (mega bucks) and the first mission for both is to get a satellite into orbit. Be the first and the prestige points will help the government's generosity next year at budget time. The game awards higher prestige points for firsts and fewer for seconds. But don't rush. Disasters spell set backs that can make it very difficult to catch up again. By weighing the risks you must determine if the time is right.

Each director (either computer or human controlled) has the responsibility of many different tasks. The space complex starts off small with only a few of the essential buildings: Administration, Vehicle Assembly, and a launch pad, among others. A facility may serve a variety of purposes or just one. The Capitol Building (Kremlin), Pentagon (KGB Headquarters) and burial sites sit ominously atop the horizon.

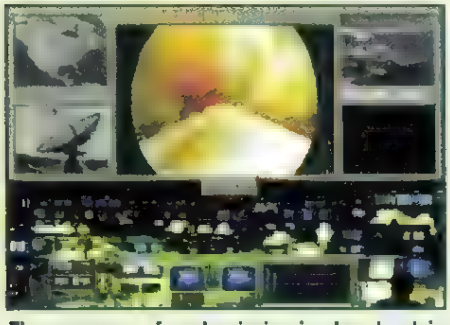
New Intelligence Reports will be provided on occasion to let you know what the other guy is doing. But don't put to much stake in their accuracy. Use your best judgment as to what is right and what is a mistake, though the KGB appears to be better at spying than the CIA.

After a couple of seasons it is time to recruit the first batch of astronauts. Some familiar names will appear on the list of applicants. Group I has seven positions to fill. The lucky ones are sent immediately to Basic Training. After spending three seasons there, the more advanced men can go straight into a Module program or into Advanced Training to hone up a specific skill.

As time passes and the program grows, so do the difficulties. Early on there are only a handful of possible missions. Later you will have many more programs and missions to choose from, though typically the funding never seems to catch up. Plan well ahead into the future and set some definite goals. Failure is all too often bred by overlooking important details. It is better to concentrate on fledgling hops than trying to soar too soon. Even more frustrating than budgetary restraints can be the moods of the space men. You must deal with compatibility problems and the fact that fly-boys do not like to sit on the ground for too long.

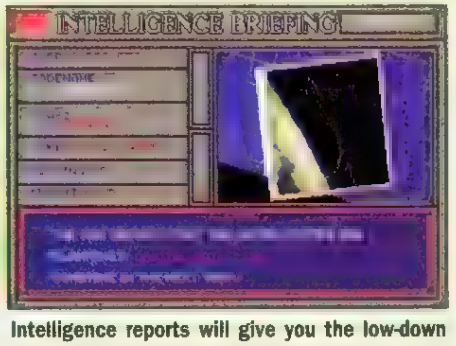
The space race theme is not the only reason why BARIS is fun to play. It gives the same sense of construction found in the Sim- games (SimCity, et al.) The space complex grows with the program. New buildings pop up with each new additional program and old ones enlarge to accommodate needed space. Your budget will only grow if the powers-that-be are happy with what you've done. The game does get very involved in later years so careful planning becomes even more crucial. The competition is unquestionably hard enough on the easy level to make for plenty of hours of gaming. Unfortunately, the manual is badly written and lacking for a game so complex. Still, BARIS is worth the troubles encountered early on. Trying to please a demanding government was never an easy task, and BARIS is by no means any easier.

-Tasos Kaiafas



The sequence of each mission is played out in full-motion video at Mission Control.

Naturally, research and development will play a vital role in the outcome of your missions.



Intelligence reports will give you the low-down on how the opposing country is performing.

EXPLORE THE INTRIGUES OF SOVIET LIFE.

DONALD SUTHERLAND LEADS THE CAST IN VIRGIN GAMES' NEWEST CD-ROM, CONSPIRACY.

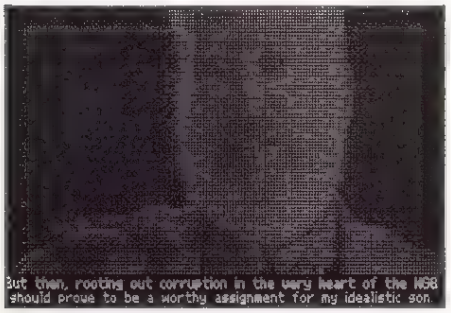
CONSPIRACY
BY VIRGIN GAMES
FOR PC CD-ROM

Conspiracy strives to provide an interactive version of those Cold War thrillers that authors like Fredrick Forsythe used to turn out in their sleep. And if French developer Cryo isn't quite as skillful as, Ian Fleming at making the drudgery of espionage seem glamorous, Conspiracy does offer gamers a series of interesting role-playing situations, built around the real world events occurring in post-Glasnost Russia. The game also offers the presence of world class actor Donald Sutherland in a series of canned FMV sequences.

The user is cast as Capt. Maksim Rukov, the son of a legendary Russian patriot (Sutherland), who is, like most Russian patriots, dead. Nonetheless, Rukov Sr. appears throughout the game as a Help Feature reminiscent of Marlon Brando's Jor-El or Obi-Wan Kenobi in the last two Star Wars films. Sometimes, he's a little like the ghost of Hamlet's father, but his counsel is generally more conciliatory, if no less cynical.

As Conspiracy begins, the player-character has been assigned a seemingly pedestrian gig in Department P, a minor Moscow KGB Directorate, where he is to covertly investigate KGB activities. Instantly, a former KGB associate of questionable loyalty turns up dead and the p-c must investigate.

After struggling with the game's occasionally daunting menu-driven transportation system, the p-c turns up in front of the dead man's apartment where he dickers with the police guard and conducts an interview with the former occupant's sister before searching the modest quarters. A tape turns up, along with a tape player and some batteries (this game loves to insert objects into other objects to make them work) which, in turn, sets the plot in motion.



Donald Sutherland, of movie and television fame, lends his acting skills to Conspiracy.

The take-scenes show a pleasant view of Moscow—but the danger still lurks at night.

The game moves along nicely enough once the gamer works out the protocols. Within each location, the gamer can use a smart cursor which produces the most obvious command every time it hits a hot spot. For example, if the pointer touches the door, the command "Go" automatically appears. Alternative commands are also available by clicking on a mouse button.

There's a lot of searching and manipulating objects at a level of sophistication somewhere between the early Icom adventures (Deja Vu, Shadowgate, etc.) and the more recent Dynamix or Sierra adventures. The conversation/ interrogation system is also flexible enough to allow the gamer to do some real role-playing, with plenty of conversational attitudes and options.

Unfortunately, while its storyline is often quite sophisticated, the game itself is not state-of-the-art. The graphics are comparable to what Sierra was doing at least five years ago. The full-screen, FMV is okay, but uses those large, heavy pixels seen frequently when FMV is enlarged in PC games. Finally, other than the Sutherland scenes—the effect of which could have been produced just as easily with a far less expensive hint feature—this game makes virtually no use of the CD-ROM medium.

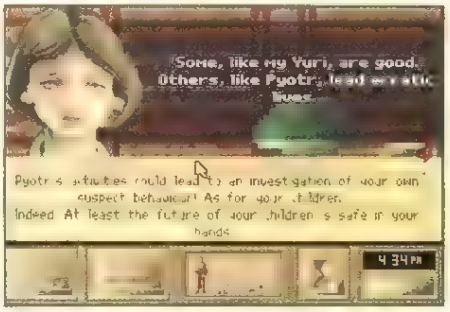
There are also some unfortunate infelicities in the game play itself. For example, when the player-character returns to Department P, he can literally stand in the middle of the room and play the tape recording, then hand it over to his superior officer, Volvov, who immediately inquires: "Have you listened to this?"

As for Sutherland's presence and performance, he is obviously uncomfortable working in this medium. His accent is a little unsteady, and he frequently comes off as wooden, though this is certainly preferable to the usual manic over-the-top acting CD games seem to inspire. Does he enhance the credibility and experiential value of Conspiracy? To an extent, the appearance by any major star lends credibility to multimedia games, but the novelty is wearing off, and the use of Sutherland is neither inspired, nor a major boost in play value.

This reviewer must admit, however, that Conspiracy offers one type of computing experience that will win it big points with the technologically well-endowed: when the program runs its automatic test of the system's CD drive, if it detects a double-speed drive, it oohs and ahhs and tells the user what a *powerful* system they have, and how it will be just *perfect* for running animations.

It may not be much, but in a hobby where computerists are constantly informed that they don't possess enough RAM, EMS, or all-purpose human value to run a given program, it was certainly nice to get a compliment for a change.

-Bill Kunkel



Questioning your fellow comrades, male or female, is the only way to gain information.

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PATRICK STEWART DEBUTS ON CD-ROM.

THE CD VERSION OF LANDS OF LORE ADDS THE VOICES OF VETERAN ACTORS TO THE PLOT OF SCOTIA'S EVIL.

LANDS OF LORE
BY WESTWOOD STUDIOS/VIRGIN
FOR PC CD-ROM

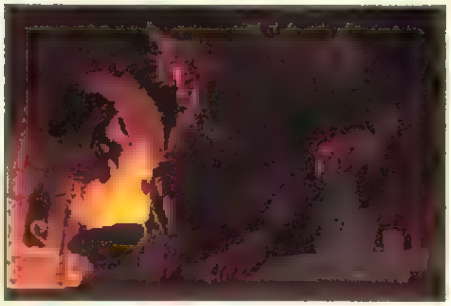
The remarkable villainess Scotia jumps from DOS to multimedia with barely a long enough pause to spew a few curses upon the Land which she and the Dark Army yearn to conquer. As champion, you lead a party of non-player characters through multiple dungeons and outdoor mazes in an attempt to spoil Scotia's evil plans.

Scotia is quite a personage, too! She may not look like any man's dream, but her powers make her an irresistible, malignant force from the opening non-interactive sequence. She's one of the most compelling evildoers to hit electronic gaming since Lord British conjured up the Guardian to bedevil the Avatar.

Westwood Studios has produced both streamlined (Kyrandia) and highly complex (Eye of the Beholder) fantasy role-playing games. Lands of Lore, which is projected as the first in a series, shows how much they've learned. It is much richer than the pure puzzle games, yet the menu-activated, point-and-click interface is so easy to master that the pace stays brisk even during real-time combat against the 50 well-rendered monsters who plague the Lands.

Unlike so-called roleplaying games that expect you to schizophrenically identify with as many as six characters, Lands of Lore focuses on a single champion. The computerist can assume the role of the magic-savvy Ak' shel, the

Characters must be well-equipped in order to do battle with Scotia's vehement forces.



strong Michael, the elusive Kieran, or the well-rounded Conrad. Many intriguing NPCs may join the hero's group during the course of play—and later leave the band according to their own special agendas.

The Lands have many races of sentient beings, but four run the show. The Ascendant Races are: Dracoid (humanoid lizards), Humans, Huline (catlike humanoids), and Thomgogs (four-armed powerhouses). The differentiation among the species provides another variable that gives Lands of Lore an extra measure of play value compared to titles based on less flexible adventuring systems.

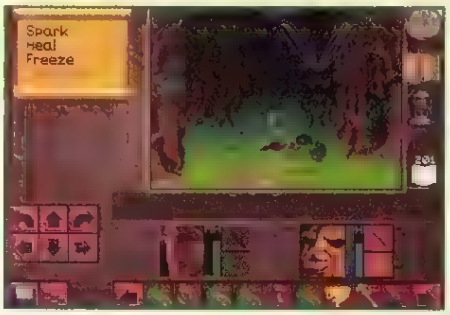
The game-system rates each character's skill as fighter, rogue and mage. The higher the skill level, the more successful a character is apt to be when doing actions that depend on that skill. Picking a lock, for instance, relies on the rogue skill.

Two ability scores monitor a character's fluctuation in two crucial areas: might and protection. Might is the amount of damage a man can inflict with a blow, and protection quantifies the effect of armor and shield.

Magic is based primarily on spells stored in a spell book. The caster acquires them by finding magic scrolls during the game and adding their contents to the spell book. Mages start with a simple spell called Spark, so they can do a little something right from the start.

On each character's status summary screen, a bar graph shows how close he is to moving up to the next level in any or all of these skills. Experience in Lands of Lore raises the level of the applicable skill.

The Land is immense, with 30 maps



Magic is a vital part of the Lands of Lore gaming world, and it must be used wisely.

filled with monsters, treasures, and adventures. An automapping feature that even logs secret doors keeps track of the quester's exploits.

Rick Parks pulls out all the artistic stops in this visual tour de force. Scotia's shape-changing, made possible by the magical Nether Mask, gives Parks a spot to shine, and he doesn't miss the opportunity. If he keeps up this scintillating work, it won't belong until someone produces a collector card set or art calendar to celebrate this rising master of fantastic illustration.

Lands of Lore uses a first-person viewpoint for both regular movement and combat. Cinematic views and animated sequences shift to an adjusted side-perspective display.

Did you know that Patrick Stewart reads "Lore of the Lands" on the CD version of this game? Did you care? Seriously, the use of such an exceptional voice actor is a coup for Westwood, and Stewart's ringing declamation definitely heightens the drama. This sequence has little effect on the story, however, which reduces it to the level of a fascinating frill.

Lands of Lore is a small upgrade of the original floppy disk product. It looks and sounds better than the DOS edition, but the improvement isn't enough to justify repurchase for gamers who already have the original in their software collection. On the other hand, this is a superb RPG adventure in a breathtaking new game-world that no serious gamer will want to miss. Producer Rick Gush's team has given us a major new work of interactive fantasy. ***-Arnie Katz***

CAN YOU RUN SILENT AND DEEP WITH WOLFPACK?

NOVALOGIC'S LATEST RELEASE GIVES SIM FANS THE CHANCE TO RULE THE SEAS, ABOVE AND BELOW.

WOLFPACK
BY NOVALOGIC
FOR PC CD-ROM

Nova Logic's excellent submarine simulator, Wolfpack, first appeared in floppy disk form in 1990, courtesy of publisher Broderbund. Now, four years later, having had the barnacles scraped off its hull and some new paint applied, it's been prepared for yet another tour of duty, this time in the CD Sea.

Most of the improvements over the earlier edition are cosmetic—there's an awesome introductory sequence, for example, that would have knocked gamers off their chairs in 1990—and quite a few new missions have been added (the original game featured a dozen pre-designed missions, whereas this CD edition boasts 36), in addition to the roll-your-own scenario building option.

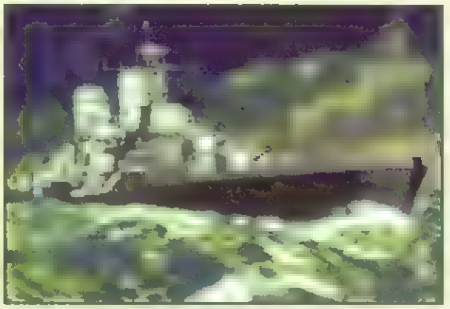
Still, it's hardly sufficient reason for owners of the original version to pick up this refitted Wolfpack. But for those simulator fans who might have missed it the first time around—Broderbund seems to reserve its PR hype mostly for games starring Carmen What's-Her-Face—shouldn't be turned off by the program's advanced age. Wolfpack was a top-of-the-line product in 1990, and it remains a very, very good game even today.

Wolfpack allows users to play one of two roles: commanding Allied destroyers on a search & destroy mission after a pack of German U-Boats, circa World War II; or the commanding officer of a German Wolfpack, looking to pick off Allied freighters, escorts, and weak sisters from beneath the safety of the sea.

Wolfpack incorporates outstanding visuals with a strong naval battle simulator.

The visual interface is heavy with instrumentation, gauges, maps, and icons, but still offers an extremely impressive first-person display of torpedo wakes and exploding ships. As mentioned above, however, the graphics are simply no longer state-of-the-art, especially in light of Nova Logic's more recent Comanche: Maximum Overkill CD edition, which took CD technology to the cutting edge.

Graphics aside, however, this is among the more playable of the realistic combat sub simulators. Wolfpack's command interface is fairly intuitive, yet still impressively realistic. Unlike many earlier sub sims, the interface does not strip away technical details to make the game portion of the program run more smoothly. Still, despite the lack of compromise on the part of designer John Garcia, even ham-fisted gamers will soon get the hang of handling a submersible combat vessel, thanks to the well thought-out learning curve available in the prefab missions. There's even a scenario, aptly dubbed "Easysub," in which the Wolfpack stumbles across several unescorted freighters in broad daylight. Talk about your fish in a barrel!



The opening scenes of the game are so life-like, you may get dizzy from the waves!

Special features include a two-player mode that allows gamers to run both subs and destroyers, a wide range of map and display options, and even the use of Milkcows for re-arming submarines while on the surface. So long as the two vessels are within 50 meters of each other, a torpedo is passed from ship to ship every 25 seconds.

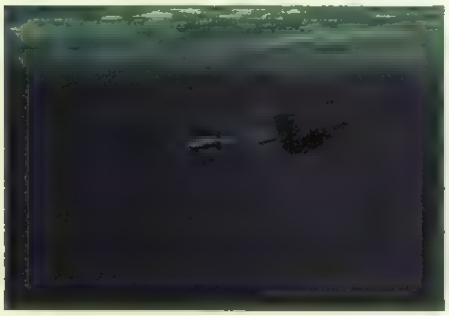
Missions can also be saved in progress, and "unlocked" missions (those which can be run from either the submarine or destroyer perspectives) can be modified and saved for future play.

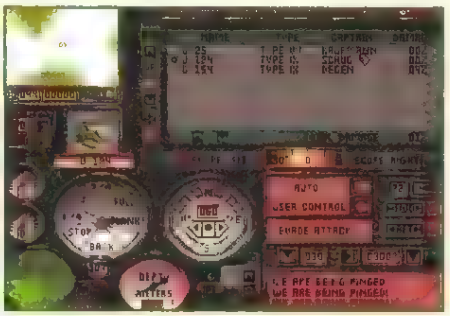
Finally, yes, it *is* more fun to play the German sub commander than to command a destroyer. Submarine simulators are about stealth, about staging quick, catastrophic attacks, then disappearing silently back beneath the roiling ocean surface.

The potential vulnerability of those destroyers, lone dots on a naked sea, is far less appealing. Unfortunately, in some of the prefabricated scenarios, the Wolfpack must face Allied ships equipped with the *verdammt* invention called "Sonar," which sends down tiny pings that reverberate off the U-Boat hulls, betraying their position. Once the destroyers lock on a U-Boat, well—you won't be seeing Berlin again, let's put it that way.

There is perhaps no more romanticized weapon of war than the WWII submarine, and while it no longer represents the cutting edge of computer gaming technology, Wolfpack is still a strong and enjoyable simulation and evocation of that era.

-Bill Kunkel





EYE CANDY ABOUNDS IN KETHER FOR THE CD-I.

HOWEVER, PLAYERS MIGHT FEEL A BIT UPSET WHEN LOOKING PAST THE VISUALS.

KETHER
BY PHILIPS
FOR PHILIPS CD-I

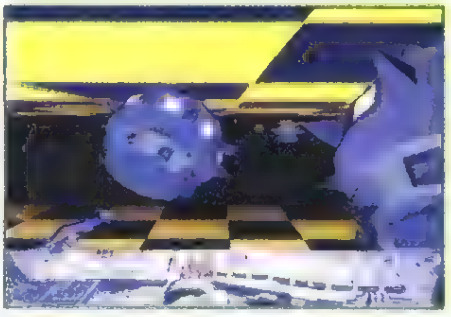
Back in the mid-80s, when computers took over from programmable video games as the medium of choice for electronic gamers, Infogrames was quite a well known name. The first major French developers to sell games to the American market, Infogrames was famous for making the games that players couldn't wait to show off to fellow hobbyists.

Infogrames mastered visual technique and presentation at a much higher level than any of the other European developers, and its product always looked spectacular. At one CES during this period, a bidding war was waged over the rights to Infogrames' Captain Blood, a sci-fi action-strategy game boasting some of the most eyeball-popping graphics ever seen in an electronic game to that point.

Mindscape won the bidding and published the title to disappointing sales. No one ever seemed to realize that, beneath the flashy graphics, there was very little game. So, while each group of computerists had one member who owned a copy of the game, there was never a reason for anyone else to buy it.

To put it another way: no one loved Captain Blood for its brain.

Now here we are, a decade later, and Infogrames is still producing some of the most visually compelling digital material in the field. Certainly, Kether, from Philips for the CD-I, is no Tetris when it comes to play value. Despite a lot of contextual hoo-hah, this is a faux first-person sci-fi action game in which players must steer their ship so as to avoid crashing into the many obstacles which fill the various levels, while simultaneously making contact with power-ups, in the form of glowing energy spheres. There is no way the player can destroy the obstacles—the gamer's ship has no weapon, after all. Obstacles can only be sidestepped, making this among the most passive action games imaginable.



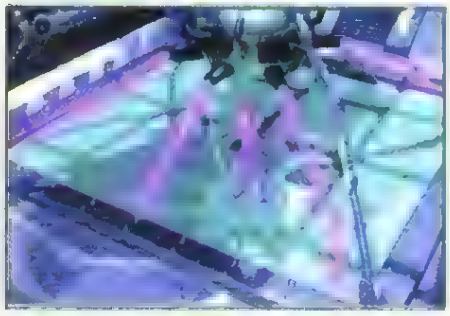
Yes, there is a game here, but it is rather confusing to play and to follow.

Players are likely to become extremely frustrated by the inability to *shoot* at the assorted asteroids, space mines, and other dangerous debris. Cleverly eluding contact with oncoming objects is all well and good, but it gets old in a hurry.

It will come as no surprise to those who've been following along that Kether is absolutely to-die-for gorgeous. Those French programmers can do more things with polygons than Hesbollah terrorists can with plastique. There are vast, geometric panoramas; enormous, grid-like planes; polygon tunnels; and a breathtaking roller coaster ride through cyberspace that ranks among the most retina-ravishing sequences in gaming history.

The player moves through a series of levels—with accompanying speech in French and English—that include an asteroid belt orbiting a planet; parallel checkerboards sandwiching a robotic mine field; and a heavy metal geometric metropolis with an impressive collection of stationary obstacles.

Of course, beautiful though it is, and appealing as Kether's many SGI-style cut scenes are, this game doesn't have a thought behind it other than that it is beautiful and that being beautiful is enough.



Incredible visual animations were painstakingly created to fit the nuances of the title.

Fans of the "Lawnmower Man" will appreciate some intense VR scenes.

After about fifteen minutes of having one's optical nerves hypnotized, titillated, and otherwise massaged, the user may begin to believe that. But spend another few minutes, and see if the compulsion to keep watching—just to see what comes up next—remains as powerful.

Kether is recommended for men who love beautiful airheads and women who dig brain-dead hunks. And, of course, one should never underestimate the enjoyment associated with calling up a friend and watching as his or her eyeballs melt as they check out Kether for the first time.

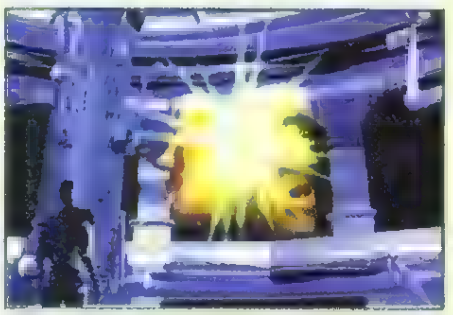
"Man," the friend is apt to remark, "I had no idea computers could do anything like this!"

Alas, technology will always be able to generate pretty pictures, and there will always be suckers who'll pay for the sizzle then wonder where the steak went. But as a pretty clever dramatist named Shakespeare once observed: "The play's the thing."

(Not bad for a guy who never got to play SimCity, huh?)

In sum, Kether is a marvelous, shiny new toy of a multimedia game. Like most good toys, its sparkles and delights the senses, but within half an hour most adults will have left it behind for something with a little more substance.

-Bill Kunkel



Multimedia junkies will thrill to the exciting displays and wonderful sounds of Kether.

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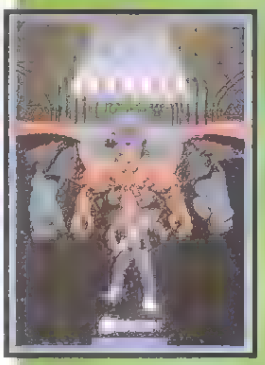

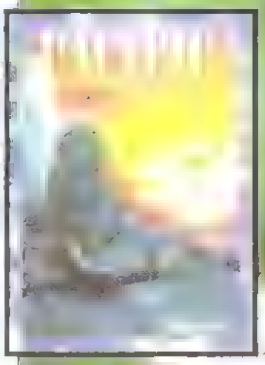

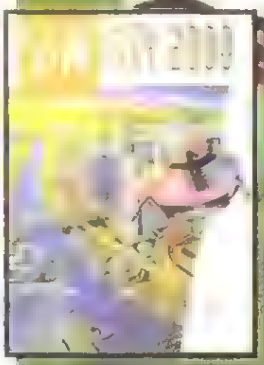

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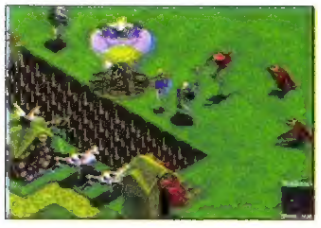
VISA

Clearly, something has startled Mr. Cow. And it ain't a pair of cold hands.



You got a village.

Farms. Huts. Knights. People to boss around. And a cow.

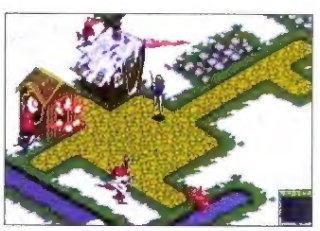
Life is good. But then you get these visitors. They're fat. They drool, burp, and smell like an outhouse. They come in hordes, eating your 3D texture-mapped huts, trees, women, children, and worst of all, your cow. You try to trash them with your sword, but it ain't easy, and their guts get all over you. Life starts to suck. You've met "The Horde", my friend. An original game with CD-quality live action video, digitized music and disgusting eating sounds. And a cast of actors who can actually act; like Kirk Cameron and Michael Gregory.

You build walls, moats, and death pits. And you hire an archer to help fend them off. Again the Horde attacks. You save the cow, but they eat your hut, your

3DO

THE HORDE™

CORN CROP, AND THAT GIRL NEXT DOOR YOU HAD YOUR EYE ON.



NOW LIFE REALLY SUCKS. AND IT AIN'T ABOUT TO GET ANY EASIER. THE EVIL HORDLINGS GROW BIGGER, FASTER, EVEN SMARTER. (AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN MET THE EVIL CHANCELLOR YET.) DEAR READER, WE PRAY YOU'RE THE SORT WHO LEARNS QUICKLY. 'CAUSE THIS STUFF'S HAPPENING ON 32 BITS. ENJOY, MY FRIEND. AND GOOD LUCK.

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